

Inspector-General of Emergency Management

Review of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA)

Report 2: 2022-2023

OFFICIAL - Public

Document Details

Security Classification	PUBLIC	Last Review Date	28 April 2023
Version Control	V1.0	Update Summary	

Security Classification	Public
Security Classification Review Date	28 April 2023
Author	Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management
Authority	Inspector-General of Emergency Management
Version Control	V1.0
ISSN	2204-969X

Information security

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Content disclaimer

IGEM has reviewed all relevant documentation and evidence provided by state agencies and other entities, the community, and sourced from relevant documents and online resources. This review report is based on the information that has been supplied to the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management as at 28 April 2023 and does not consider any other material that has not been provided or sighted by the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management. It is therefore possible that some inconsistencies may be present despite the best efforts of the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management to validate and align the raw data utilised throughout this report.

Letter of transmission

28 April 2023

The Honourable Mark Ryan
Minister for Police and Corrective Services and
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services
PO Box 15195
CITY EAST QLD 4002



Inspector-General of
Emergency Management

Dear Minister

In accordance with instructions received from Government on 14 December 2022, consistent with the Queensland Government response to the *Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Report* by KPMG, I present the following report to review and inform any changes to Queensland's disaster management arrangements (QDMA), legislative reforms, updates to the State Disaster Management Plan, and the transition of disaster management functions to the Queensland Police Services (QPS) and other relevant agencies.

As requested, in conducting the Review my office worked closely with partners across all levels of the QDMA, including the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, QPS, QFES, Queensland Reconstruction Authority, relevant state and local agencies involved in disaster management, the State Disaster Coordinator, the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), and other relevant stakeholders to obtain information necessary to the review. Previous IGEM reviews and relevant reviews, including the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020*, were also considered.

The approach was consultative, involved 50,000 kilometres travel across Queensland to engage with over 210 partners and groups across 38 different locations in Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, including 23 disaster districts. The office also conducted two roundtable discussions relating to information sharing across all phases of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery and fostering greater inclusion of First Nations peoples in disaster management and risk reduction.

The report, its learnings and its recommendations reflect the *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland*, identifying both good practice examples and opportunities for enhancement in Queensland's disaster management arrangements.

Yours sincerely

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

Alistair Dawson APM

Inspector-General of Emergency Management

Acknowledgement of Country

IGEM acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this Country. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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Acknowledgements

The Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management would like to extend our appreciation and warmest thanks to all who have assisted with this review. Contributors' willingness to make time for face-to-face meetings, actively participate in forums and/or prepare written submissions has enabled development of the review.

As part of the engagement the review team has travelled more than 50,000 kilometres and met with over 210 partners and practitioners in 38 different locations across Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The review team would like to thank and acknowledge their significant contribution to this report.

We acknowledge the support, guidance and assistance provided by many agencies, local governments and non-government organisations that have provided information, submissions and given their time freely to meet and accommodate the review's needs.

This report would not have been possible without the large number of contributions received through the various meetings and forums, submissions and conversations with community leaders and practitioners. We recognise the strength and courage required by participants to be open and frank in sharing their personal experiences and we thank you for your time and positive engagement.

The Inspector-General of Emergency Management would also like to recognise all members of staff, and those seconded into the agency, for their professionalism, support, hard work and inquiring minds in undertaking this review.

Executive Summary

On 26 October 2022 the Government released *Good Jobs and Better Fire and Emergency Services to Support Queensland's Great Lifestyle* in response to the Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services conducted by KPMG. The response in part identified, *"the SES and marine rescue services, under the soon to be established Marine Rescue Queensland (MRQ), are better aligned with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). As such, the Government has decided that these services will be established as separate entities with their own dedicated budgets within the QPS. Queensland's disaster management functions are also better aligned with the QPS and should be transferred to the stewardship of the QPS. The government supports this transition of disaster management functions to the QPS, along with the management of service agreements"* (Queensland Government, 2022).

The Government's response also requested the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM) *"to conduct a review of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA)...to inform any changes to disaster management arrangements, legislative reforms, or any updates to the State Disaster Management Plan"* (Queensland Government, 2022). The IGEM was issued [Terms of Reference for the Review](#) on 14 December 2022. The final report was due to government on 29 April 2023.

Since 2011, Queensland has experienced more than 97 significant natural disasters. This has resulted in Commonwealth and State recovery and reconstruction efforts exceeding \$20 billion (Queensland Reconstruction Authority, 2022).

The challenges moving forward for the State and our disaster management arrangements include *"unprecedented change in both the current and future operating environment with a dynamic political, social, economic and policy landscape surrounding disaster risk reduction and resilience. This is being amplified by natural hazards becoming more frequent and intense due to a changing climate. Essential services are more interconnected and interdependent than ever before, and people and assets are more exposed and vulnerable due to cascading shocks and stresses"* (Queensland Reconstruction Authority, 2022).

This review report into the QDMA is structured in three parts. Past, Present and Future.

The Past narrates the origins and evolution of the QDMA from the early 1900s. The research reflects on the civil defence capabilities developed in response to the threat of air raids during the Second World War; and the Civil Defence Acts (1939 to 1942) which formed the basis for the disaster

management arrangements in place today. Significant disasters in Queensland, and across the nation, have also shaped and matured the sector.

The Present outlines the tiered system of disaster management in Queensland, and reinforces the importance of governance, partnerships and the locally-led approach. It also examines models across Australia and the influence international doctrine such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change have on managing disaster risk locally.

The Future, this Review, provides a narrative of the complex environment within which disasters have been, and are, managed today. In more recent times COVID-19 added new dimensions of complexity, interconnectedness and vulnerability; biohazards, climate change, cyber security and polycrisis (the simultaneous occurrence of several catastrophic events) pose additional and unfamiliar challenges. Looking forward, the QDMA will require disaster risk management via adaptive systems and governance that anticipate and absorb the unfamiliar, provide stability in a complicated world, and leverage new opportunities, networks and partnerships.

This review makes 10 recommendations that will draw together the components of Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery as well as Resilience, under the QDMA. The proposed changes facilitate the Queensland Disaster Management Committee (QDMC) to be agile and adaptable in delivering strategic leadership and direction across the QDMA as and when circumstances require.

There are two new groups proposed: the re-instatement of the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG), and the formation of the State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG). The SDMG will manage the business of disaster management for the State on behalf of the QDMC. When the QDMC convenes the SDMG will be absorbed into the QDMC, supporting the ministerial cohort under the chairship of the Premier. When the QDMC deactivates, the SDMG will reform.

The SRRG, a new group proposed under the chair of the QRA, will operationalise strategic direction, provide advice on outcomes and any emerging strategic issues as they relate to Resilience, Prevention, Preparedness and Recovery. The SRRG compliments the State Disaster Coordination Group, which will focus on response and preparedness for response. Both the SDCG and the SRRG will meet throughout the year at the discretion of their respective chairs.

It is proposed that the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld) (the Act) incorporate the recognition of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC), similar to that of the State Disaster Coordinator.

It is also suggested that the term 'Emergency Supply' which is currently managed by an agency, be renamed to 'Emergency Relief', reflecting Outcome 10 of the *Standard for Disaster Management* (the Standard): "*Relief operations minimise the negative impacts of an event on the community and provide the support needed for recovery*". Further, that an Emergency Relief Subcommittee be formed to support both the SDCG and SRRG during an event. This Subcommittee should be comprised of agencies, NGOs, industry representatives and utilities to give both cause and effect to emergency relief tasks. This would enable Emergency Relief to move to a model reflecting a strong integrated partnership.

As part of the engagement strategy for this review, the IGEM team has travelled more than 50,000 kilometres and met with over 210 partners and practitioners in 38 different locations across Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The locations in Queensland have extended North to Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, South to the Gold Coast, and West to Mount Isa and Goondiwindi. This engagement has included councils from remote, rural and isolated areas of the State.

Additionally, the Office of the IGEM received 116 written submissions, facilitated 59 interviews and discussions with individuals and groups from relevant entities (including face-to-face, telephone and virtual consultation), and facilitated two roundtables. The Office of the IGEM also analysed existing doctrine, including relevant legislation, plans, and frameworks. The Office of the IGEM also reviewed 255 recommendations from 14 public-facing IGEM reviews, and the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* (RCNDA).

The review team found examples of good practice across the QDMA and observed the challenges and opportunities posed by our unique State. The Review considers the tiered approach of the QDMA - locally led, regionally coordinated, State facilitated, and Commonwealth supported – is the optimum model for the State into the future.

Recommendations

1. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management legislation:
 - a. That the Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service be appointed as the Chief Executive of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.
 - b. That the *Disaster Management Act 2003* be amended to reflect the new role and function of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee.
 - c. That a State Disaster Management Group is established within the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.
 - d. That the *Disaster Management Act 2003* be amended to establish the position, role and functions of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator.
-

2. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management structures:
 - a. That the State Disaster Coordination Group revert to a single Chair arrangement (chaired by a Senior Queensland Police Officer), focused on response and the aspect of preparedness for, and resilience in, response. The Terms of Reference should be amended to incorporate this and other changes to its role and functions.
 - b. That a State Recovery and Resilience Group be established and embedded in the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements alongside the State Disaster Coordination Group, to focus on disaster management functions outside of response. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority should lead the establishment of the State Recovery and Resilience Group, develop the Terms of Reference and chair the group.
 - c. That, to support the State Recovery and Resilience Group, the Functional Recovery Groups expand their remit to incorporate resilience and be renamed Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups.
 - d. That clear lines of reporting be established between any appointed State Recovery Coordinator and the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator.
 - e. That an Emergency Relief Subcommittee of the State Disaster Coordination Group and the State Recovery and Resilience Group be established to reflect a strong partnership arrangement to address all aspects of Emergency Relief. The roles of Chair and Deputy Chair
-

are to be determined via consultation between the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

- f. That the final composition of the Emergency Relief subcommittee's inner and outer core membership be a joint responsibility of the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, in consultation with the State Disaster Coordinator and the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator.
 - g. That the Queensland Reconstruction Authority leads state-level hazard and risk functions, including the design and delivery of a risk assessment tool that is locally appropriate, cost-effective and fit for purpose.
-

3. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's disaster management plans and guidelines:

- a. That there should be one State Disaster Management Plan that succinctly describes all of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements, supported by separate sub-plans across the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery comprehensive model, including Resilience, mirroring the new governance structure. The State Disaster Management Plan should be reviewed biannually and/or following debriefs from significant disaster operations where relevant.
 - b. That the term 'Emergency Supply' be changed to 'Emergency Relief' in the State Disaster Management Plan.
 - c. That the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning develop an Emergency Relief strategy.
-

4. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to the ways that Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements support cross-border collaboration:

- a. That documents and plans that support the operationalisation of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements is updated to encourage and enable cross-border disaster
-

management engagement and relationships at officer-level, council to council, and district to district.

- b. That all Local and District Disaster Management Groups who share a border or borders with other states or Territories conduct collaborative disaster management planning and exercising.
-

5. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to the ways that 'resilience' is reflected in Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements:

- a. That the *Disaster Management Act 2003* be amended to include a definition of 'resilience' that reflects the Queensland Government's endorsed definition within the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience, clarifying that Resilience functions incorporate activities related to the phases of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.
-

6. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following change to the way that Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements are supported through Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements:

- a. That the Queensland Reconstruction Authority be Queensland's lead agency coordinating Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Ministerial responsibility for activation of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements should transfer from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, to the Minister responsible for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.
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7. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following action linked to disaster management preparedness messaging:

- a. That the Queensland Reconstruction Authority 'Get Ready Queensland' brand expands to include bushfire awareness campaigns and 'If It's Flooded Forget It'.
-

8. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following actions linked to Disaster Management sector capability and accreditation:

- a. That all training associated with the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework should, wherever possible, identify and utilise pathways to achieve nationally recognised qualifications.
 - b. That the Queensland Police Service undertake a capability assessment of the State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue Queensland, and the broader disaster management sector, for the present and future. This should include a review of the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework.
-

9. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following actions to support a seamless transition of Disaster Management responsibilities from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to the Queensland Police Service:

- a. That the roles and Terms of Reference of all current state and national disaster management committees that are non-hazard specific, and that reflect state disaster management arrangements and policy, be tabled at the Reform Implementation Taskforce for discussion and consideration of future representation.
 - b. That the Reform Implementation Taskforce seeks clarity on all Memoranda of Understanding and agreements that are currently in scope as a result of the proposed Machinery of Government changes.
 - c. That any open Queensland Fire and Emergency Services recommendations made by the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, that are not hazard specific, transition to the Queensland Police Service at a time to be identified by the Reform Implementation Taskforce. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services should continue to progress implementation of
-

recommendations, in consultation with the Queensland Police Service, until Machinery of Government changes are implemented.

- d. That the Reform Implementation Taskforce determines the most appropriate agency to manage the ongoing whole-of-government coordination of implementation and reporting on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. Until this time, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services should continue to progress implementation of recommendations, in consultation with the Reform Implementation Taskforce.
-

10. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following actions linked to the effective implementation and evaluation of the changes to Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements accepted from this Review:

- a. That, in the 2027/28 financial year, the Inspector-General of Emergency Management partner with the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Reconstruction Authority to review the implementation of the Machinery of Government changes, and revised Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements.
 - b. That, for the recommendations arising from this review, the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management is involved in consultation prior to the finalisation of the government action plan, to align intended actions with the intent of the recommendations.
 - c. That this Review report be returned to the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management to monitor, evaluate and report on progress and implementation of the recommendations that are accepted in whole or in part by government.
-

Abbreviations

the Act	<i>Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld)</i>
AGCMF	<i>Australian Government Crisis Management Framework</i>
AIDR	Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
Alliance	The LGAQ Queensland Disaster Management Alliance
ANZEMC	Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee
AVCGA	Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association
BAU	Business as Usual
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CCN	Crisis Communication Network
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COMDISPLAN	<i>Australian Government Disaster Response Plan 2020</i>
COVID-19	The illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Darby Report	The 2020 SES Review, <i>Sustaining the SES – Partnering for Change</i> by Campbell Darby
DDC	District Disaster Coordinator
DDCC	District Disaster Coordination Centre
DDMG	District Disaster Management Group
Deputy LDC	Deputy Local Disaster Coordinator
DES	Department of Emergency Services
DIEMS	Disaster Incident Event Management System
DMCC	Disaster Management Cabinet Committee
DMO	Disaster Management Officer
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRFA	<i>Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements</i>
EMAF	<i>Emergency Management Assurance Framework</i>
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator
EMS	Event Management System
FES Act	<i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (Qld)</i>
FRG	Functional Recovery Groups
GAR Report	<i>UN Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction</i>

GIS Geographic Information Systems

HSPA Hazard-Specific Primary Agencies. Agencies allocated a responsibility to prepare for, and to combat, the specific hazards based on their legislated and/or technical capability and authority.

ICT Information and Communications Technology

IGEM The Inspector-General of Emergency Management

Independent Review *The 2021 Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)* report by KPMG

IP Act *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld)

IT Information Technology

FLA Functional Lead Agency. Agency allocated responsibility to prepare for, and provide, an allocated function. They may also be required to provide support to other functions.

LDC Local Disaster Coordinator

LDCC Local Disaster Coordination Centre

LDMG Local Disaster Management Group

LDMP Local Disaster Management Plan

Lexicon *Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon*

LGA Local government area

LGAQ Local Government Association of Queensland

MoU Memorandum of Understanding

MRQ	Marine Rescue Queensland
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NEMMM	National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting
NGO	Non-government organisation
NRRA	National Recovery and Resilience Agency
NSW	New South Wales
Office of the IGEM	Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management
O'Sullivan Review	<i>The 2009 Report on A Review of Disaster Management Legislation and Policy in Queensland</i> , by Jim O'Sullivan and the Consultancy Bureau
PACSR	<i>The 2012 Police and Community Safety Review</i> by Mick Keelty
Participant Guide	<i>The Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements Participant Guide</i>
P-CEP	Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness
PPRR guideline	<i>Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline</i>
QAO	Queensland Audit Office
Q-CAS	<i>Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy</i>
QDMA	<i>Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements</i>
QDMC	Queensland Disaster Management Committee
QDMTF	<i>Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework</i>

QDN	Queenslanders with a Disability Network
QERMF	<i>Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework</i>
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Qld	Queensland
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QRA	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
QRA Act	<i>Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011 (Qld)</i>
RCNDA	<i>The 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements</i>
the Regulation	<i>Disaster Management Regulation 2014 (Qld)</i>
RFA	Requests for Assistance
RFS	Rural Fire Service
SCDO	<i>State Counter Disaster Organisation Act 1975 (Qld)</i>
SDC	State Disaster Coordinator
SDCC	State Disaster Coordination Centre
SDCG	State Disaster Coordination Group
SDMG	State Disaster Management Group
SDMP	<i>State Disaster Management Plan</i>
SDRA	<i>State Disaster Relief Arrangements</i>

SEQ South-East Queensland

SES State Emergency Service

SPF Strategic Policy Framework

SPS Strategic Policy Statement

SRC State Recovery Coordinator

SRPPC State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator

the Standard *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland*

Strategy *Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience*

TAFE Technical and Further Education

TAMS Task and Management System

TC Tropical Cyclone

Toolkit Recovery Exercising Toolkit

UN United Nations

VET Vocational Education and Training

VMRAQ Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland

XO Executive Officer

Context

Queensland (Qld) is prone to natural hazards and disasters. The State is also disproportionately affected by the consequences of these disasters, with the total economic costs of natural hazard impacts across Qld projected to be \$18.3 billion per annum by 2050 (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). The term ‘unprecedented’ has become a common way to describe many of the floods, weather events and disasters that have occurred in Qld during the last five years. The dual impacts of COVID-19 and changing climate (alongside other localised disasters such as the rainfall and floods that affected South East Qld in early 2022) *clearly demonstrated that, in today’s crowded and interconnected world, disaster impacts are increasing and cascading across geographies and sectors* (World Economic Forum, 2022).

New vulnerabilities have emerged, and already marginalised groups are becoming even more vulnerable. The sense that no-one is safe from the impacts of disasters is now pervasive, placing greater demands on the disaster management sector, volunteers and resources.

Sense-making, how we gather information and interpret it along with our experiences to understand our world, make decisions, and act, is also changing (Urquhart, Chun Lam, Ceuk, & Dervin, 2020). The speed at which decisions need to be made is rapidly increasing – *the drive for continual improvement and the need to manage more extreme events requires decision-making to become sophisticated and to achieve even higher levels of reliability* (Brooks, Curnin, Bearman, Owen, & Rainbird, 2016). The traditional queues, touch points and systems we use to process and react to risks are being challenged.

Managing catastrophic disasters through a command-and-control model is no longer enough to cover the strategic levels of planning and decision-making in the recurrent and volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environments (VUCA) that catastrophic disasters present. (Department of Home Affairs, 2020)

Biohazards, cyber security, population change, resource depletion, access to information, and misinformation, have emerged as significant challenges. Critical system interdependencies, amplified by underlying vulnerabilities, highlight the growing need to better understand cascading impacts, systemic risks and the possible political (governance) and societal responses. Despite progress in these areas, risk creation is outstripping risk reduction (World Economic Forum, 2022), warranting a review of the ways in which Qld plans and prepares for, mitigates and/or prevents, and responds to, these risks.

The foundations on which Qld's Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) are based – a locally-led 'all-hazards approach' that uses the comprehensive Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) comprehensive model – are still relevant. However, the arrangements also need to reflect and respond to the increasing complexity of the environment in which they are applied (Binskin et al., 2020). This includes shifting from a reactive, response-focused approach, to looking forward, anticipating change and taking a systemic view of risk and consequences. Governance and accountability provide further backbones to enable trust, responsibility, transparency and learning under increasing complexity (Washington, 2023).

The [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#) (Sendai Framework) outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new, and reduce existing, disaster risks: (i) *Understanding disaster risk*; (ii) *Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk*; (iii) *Investing in disaster reduction for resilience and*; (iv) *Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction* (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015). The Sendai Framework calls for the move from a focus on *managing disasters* to a *disaster risk management* approach. This reinforces the PPRR/comprehensive model as an essential element in strengthening resilience but applies it as a *"means of achieving disaster risk reduction, as opposed to managing disasters"*. Disaster risk management (DRM) requires *"multi-hazard approaches and inclusive, risk-informed decision making"* (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015).

The Sendai Framework shifts the focus away from disasters and moves it to the people, and the hazards, consequences, capabilities and systems that enable DRM. The refocus reinforces the need to understand the context within which people, communities and hazards are located, and how they interact to create risk, as well as opportunities for change. This includes ensuring that the governance, arrangements and capabilities supporting the DRM sectors can adapt to new and emerging risks. Risk assessments must *"better capture the roles of decision-making dynamics"* (Kruczkiewicz et al., 2021), system interactions and dependencies, and the complexities in which risks occur. But most importantly, information about risk needs to be communicated, engaged with, and used to inform PPRR now and into the future.

Australia's current disaster resilience model is not broken: inevitably with more frequent and more intense emergency events associated with climate change, more capability may be required to manage disasters, but this is not new or unimagined capability – rather, it involves building off the sound base that already exists. (AFAC, 2023)

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) was commissioned by the Federal Government in 2020 to deliver an independent study recommending ways in which Australia can increase its climate and disaster resilience (CSIRO, 2020). The CSIRO identified six ways to *take Australia to the next level of building disaster resilience* (CSIRO, 2020):

- A harmonised and **collaborative** national approach is required to achieve global best practice.
- **Systems thinking** and solutions to deal with complexity – including foresighting, management of risk, and learning and education for all stakeholders.
- Availability of **data**.
- The **community** plays an essential role in all phases of resilience building and must be appropriately included and engaged.
- **Investment** in targeted research, science and technology remains a key enabler of many of the improvements required to build resilience.
- Build back better – **resilience needs to be embedded** as an explicit consideration in all future planning, agricultural and urban land use and zoning and investment decisions.

Collaboration and partnerships, learning and growth, data and information sharing about risk will help ensure arrangements, such as the QDMA, are future focused, equitable, agile and adaptable, meeting the needs of *all* Queenslanders as we engage with an increasingly uncertain and complex future.

Authorising Environment

On 14 December 2022, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services tasked the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM) to undertake a Review of Queensland’s Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA). The Terms of Reference are at Appendix A.

The legislated functions of the Office of the IGEM are outlined in s 16C of the [Disaster Management Act 2003](#) (Qld) (the Act). This review was conducted in accordance with those functions.

Purpose

On 26 October 2022, the Qld Government announced its “*Good Jobs and Better Fire and Emergency Services to Support Queensland’s Great Lifestyle*” response [\(the Government Response\)](#) to the

Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) report by KPMG (the Independent Review). The Government Response is at Appendix B.

The Government has accepted, in principle, 18 of the 19 recommendations, with the exception of Recommendation 12. The Government has formed a Reform Implementation Taskforce to coordinate implementation of these recommendations over a two-year period. The focus of the Taskforce is to:

- align the State Emergency Services (SES) and Marine Rescue Queensland (MRQ), as separate entities, with the Qld Police Service (QPS)
- transfer the disaster management functions held by QFES to QPS
- establish a dedicated fire service, that aligns the Rural Fire Service (RFS) as a separate entity under QFES
- provide a detailed scope for the additional funding and resourcing for entities named in the Government Response, i.e. SES, MRQ, RFS, QFES, QPS and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA).

On 14 December 2022, consistent with the recommendations of the Independent Review, the Government requested the IGEM to conduct a review of the QDMA to inform any changes to the arrangements, legislative reforms, or any updates to the SDMP. This review will also inform the transition of disaster management functions to the QPS and other relevant agencies. In undertaking this review, IGEM will deliver a report by 29 April 2023 that addresses the Government's Terms of Reference and will be based on the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (the Standard).

Scope

In scope

This report has been prepared for the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. The Terms of Reference direct that the review focus on:

- the roles and responsibilities of parties to the arrangements;
- the role and effectiveness of disaster management committees reflected, and not reflected, in the Act including the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, State Disaster Management Group, District Disaster Management Committees, Local Disaster Management Committees and recovery focused committees;
- any matters to inform the appropriate allocation of State-level disaster management functions across agencies in the context of outcomes from the Independent Review of QFES

(noting the transition of the State Emergency Service and volunteer marine rescue functions to the QPS); and

- any matters to inform update of the Act and State Disaster Management Plan to support implementation of the structural elements of the Government Response; and
- clarification of roles and responsibilities of committees and parties to the arrangements.

Out of scope

- Work designated to the Reform Implementation Taskforce.
- Operationalising the Machinery of Government changes identified in the Government Response.
- Funding arrangements for the Machinery of Government changes.
- Requests that entail functions and/or positions that are outside of the QDMA.
- Requests for additional resourcing.

Methodology

IGEM has developed a methodology for conducting assurance activities. It brings together the intent of the [Strategic Policy Statement](#) (SPS) and the principles of the [Emergency Management Assurance Framework](#) and aligns analysis to the [Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland](#). The IGEM Methodology outlines the minimum requirements for IGEM reviews.

To ensure a balanced approach to data collection and analysis, IGEM sought subject matter experts from partner agencies within the disaster management sector, as well as the private sector. Specialists from QRA, QPS and QFES were engaged for the duration of the review and assisted with planning, engagement, data analysis and writing components of the report. As part of the engagement the IGEM and staff travelled more than 50,000 kilometres and met with partners and practitioners in 38 different locations across Qld, New South Wales (NSW) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The IGEM would like to thank and acknowledge their significant contribution to this report, and for the agencies' support in making this happen.

Data collection methods

IGEM uses a mixed-methods approach, which includes collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources. This results in a high level of data validation, ensuring that IGEM review reports are informed and based on reliable evidence.

In undertaking this review, the IGEM worked closely with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, QPS, QFES, QRA, Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, relevant state agencies involved in disaster management, the State Disaster Coordinator (SDC), State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC), the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), and other relevant stakeholders to obtain information necessary to the review.

The IGEM invited submissions from federal and state agencies, local governments, in scope committees, non-government organisations and key stakeholders. Agencies were given several opportunities to participate in this review, including requests for information, structured submissions, and discussions. The Inspector-General and the review team met with local and state agency representatives, and with non-government organisations across Qld. This included Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) and District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) Chairs and members from Goondiwindi in the South, Mount Isa in the West, the Torres Strait Islands in the North and numerous inland and coastal centres on the East coast. At the same time, a contingent of the review team met with frontline officers; Emergency Management Coordinators (EMCs), Executive Officers (XOs) and Disaster Management Officers (DMOs) across the State.

IGEM received 116 written submissions, facilitated 59 interviews and discussions with individuals and groups from relevant entities, including face-to-face, telephone and virtual consultation, and facilitated two roundtables. IGEM also analysed existing doctrine, including relevant legislation, plans, and frameworks. Additionally, IGEM reviewed 255 recommendations from 14 public-facing IGEM reviews and the [RCNDA](#).

The IGEM ensured examples of good practice and any opportunities for improvement are highlighted in the report, along with relevant observations, insights, findings and recommendations.

Data Analysis

To analyse the data collected, IGEM utilised the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. An initial set of themes were developed by taking a sample of the formal submissions, using the Terms of Reference, and drawing on expertise within IGEM. From this initial set of themes, a codebook was

developed to begin the process of coding the formal submissions, meeting notes and strategy documents. After an initial round of analysis, the key themes of the review were established.

To ensure the data collection was robust, and to minimise bias, IGEM worked with stakeholders from the disaster management sector to help validate the analysis. This additional step in the data collection and analysis process, provided confidence that the findings reflected the diverse range of disaster management stakeholders. This allowed IGEM to consider and assess common and divergent perspectives on the QDMA. The final codebook provided significant insight into general and specific aspects of the review, highlighting a range of variables which have informed the set of recommendations.

To analyse the review recommendations, the review team used Microsoft® Excel, coding recommendations that related to key points in the Terms of Reference and considering whether these related to a local level or the system level. IGEM also considered recurring themes amongst the previous recommendations and further analysed those relevant to this review. To ensure that more than one person has validated the interpretation of each piece of evidence, the review team used techniques known as inter-rater or inter-observer methods. These ascertain the reliability of data analyses and writing conducted during an assurance activity and include:

- Multiple review team members individually analysing the same data against the same criteria, and comparing their evaluations
- Internal review team discussions about their views about conversations or situations that they have observed together, to interrogate and build consensus around any subjective assessments that they may decide to make
- Peer-review of analysis and written sections of a report, including findings and recommendations.

PAST

Evolution of the QDMA

The 1900s-1960s – Civil Defence and Air Raids

Early disaster management arrangements originated from civil defence responses to the threats of air raids and nuclear attacks during the Second World War (Britton, 1991). Nationally, in Australia, a Commonwealth Department of Home Secretary was established in 1941 as part of the Department of

Defence Coordination (Britton, 1991). Its function was as a central coordination authority for developing civil defence measures and aiding the states. In Qld, the Civil Defence Acts 1939 to 1942 created the basis for the disaster management arrangements in place today, including the multi-agency approach (Queensland Government, 1939, 1941, 1942). The Civil Defence Organisation established in 1967 brought police, ambulance, welfare, transport and rescue services together for the first time in Qld (Queensland Government, 1967).

The 1970s – Disasters and Frameworks

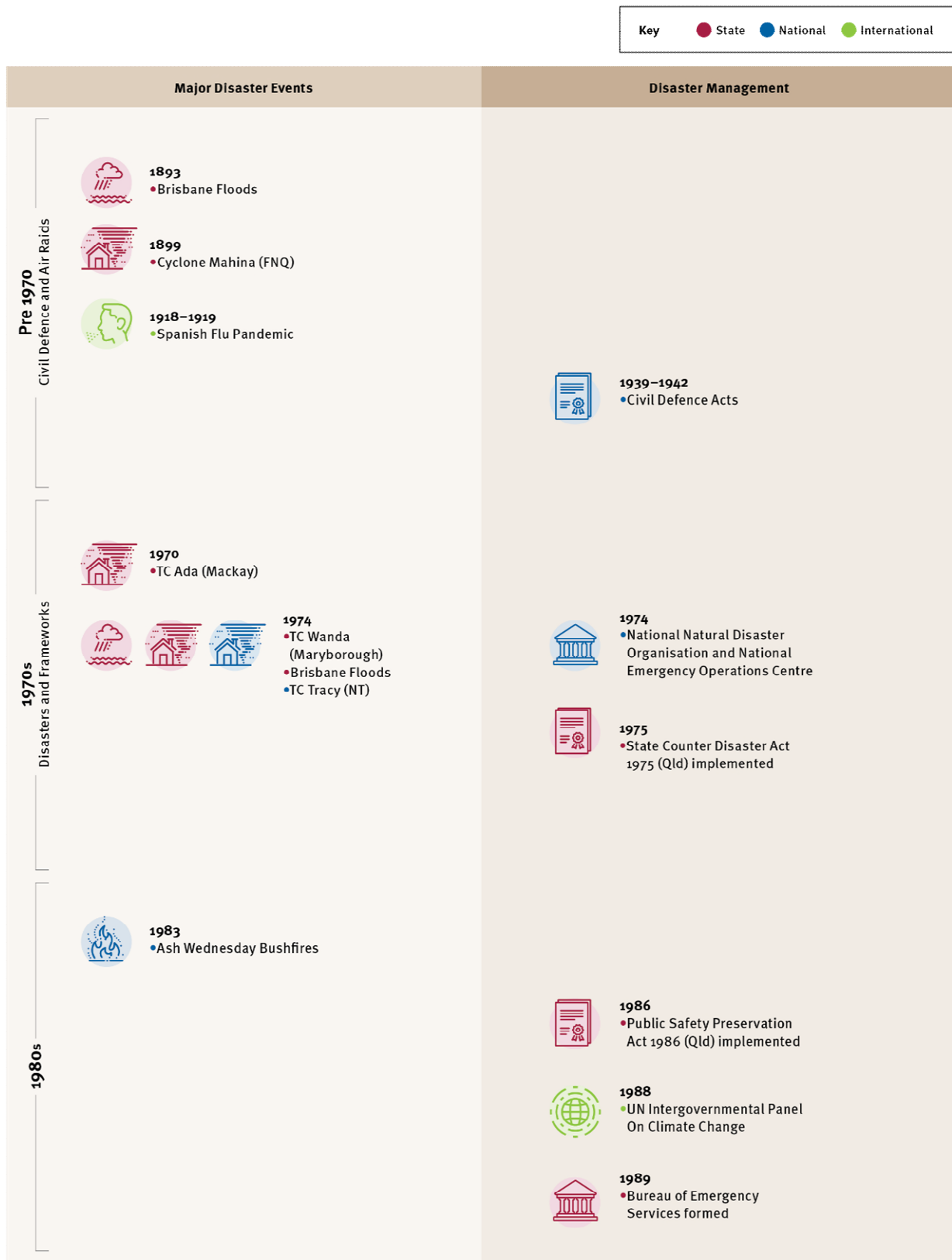
The 1970s was a decade of significant disaster events and new frameworks for Qld. Severe Tropical Cyclone Ada and major creek flooding in Brisbane in the early 1970s were key events that shaped the development of formalised disaster management in Qld. In 1970 the State Disaster Relief Organisation led by Qld Police was established under the Civil Defence Organisation. In 1974 this became the Qld State Emergency Service (Queensland Government, 1974). Early reports following disaster events highlighted gaps in warning systems, communications, messaging and the need for disaster plans (Bureau of Meteorology, 1970).

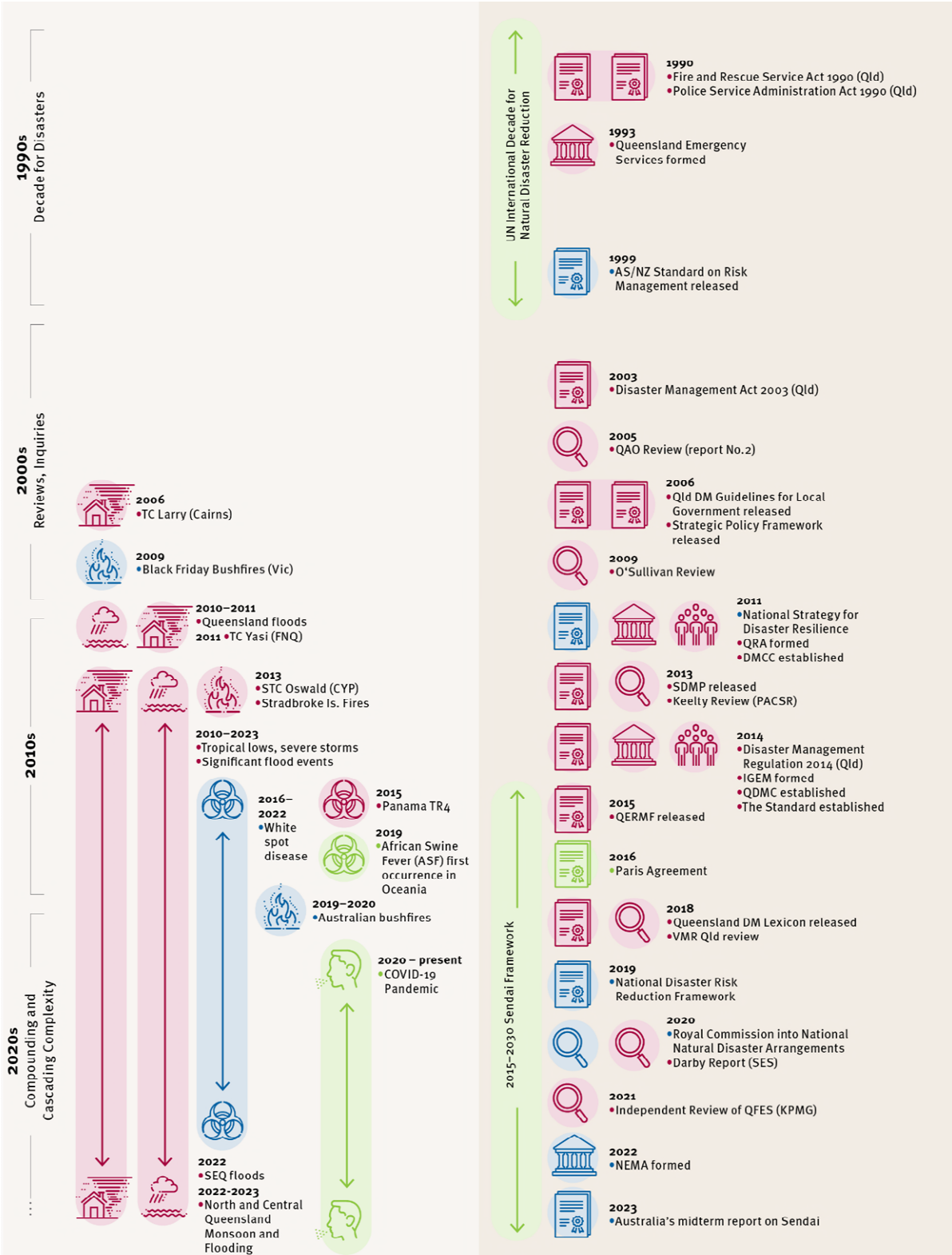
PPRR – The Comprehensive Model Takes Shape

Internationally, the comprehensive model, also known as the four-phase PPRR framework (Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery stages) gained prominence in the late 1970s, following introduction in the United States of the Governor’s Guide to Emergency Management to broaden the scope of disaster management to include pre- and post-disaster stages (National Governors' Association, 1979; Neal, 1997). Early planning by Qld Police noted that entities already recognised five stages of a disaster, from the pre-disaster phase, warning phase, common impact phase, and emergency phase, followed by a recovery phase (Hale, 1974). The Qld Police also noted early on that the public began to rely on a central authority to manage disasters. It was identified that *“because of the complex sociological problems of the day, the public takes for granted that, essentially, an organised authority will step in and deal with disasters”* (Hale, 1974).

The [*State Counter Disaster Act*](#) of 1975 (SCDO) was established to overcome past deficiencies in disaster management, including the finding that the Qld community *was largely unaware about disasters and that there were significant gaps in communication between agencies, volunteers and others involved in disaster management.*

Figure 1 – Timeline of significant events and milestones





The SCDO gave the first legal powers for the preservation of human life and defined a disaster as *a flood, earthquake, seismic seawave, cyclone, storm, tornado, eruption or other natural happening; any explosion, fire, oil spill or accident of any kind; any infestation, plague or epidemic; an attack directed against the state whether or not made by an enemy and whether by bombs or missiles or by atomic, chemical, or other means, that causes or threatens to cause loss of life or property or injury to persons or property or to distress persons or that in any way endangers the safety of the public in the state or any part thereof (Queensland Government, 1975).*

Under the SCDO, counter disaster was recognised and defined as *the planning, organisation, coordination or implementation of measures that are necessary or desirable to prevent, minimise the effects of a disaster upon members of the public or any property in the State and includes the conduct of or participation in training for these purposes; the term also includes civil defence measures necessary to combat the effects of enemy attack or hostilities (s 7).* The SCDO enabled the governor and/or disaster district controller to declare a state of disaster if an impending event was identified as beyond the capacity of existing council disaster measures or statutory services. The SCDO also defined the first disaster districts and disaster district control groups and obligated local governments to prepare local response plans for their community. The functions of the SES were established, including the education and training of members of the public, and the coordination, direction and control of members of the public, material and resources, for counter disaster purposes. In 1978 an additional function was added for the SES enabling them to *advise and assist local authorities, government departments, statutory organisations, voluntary groups and other bodies (Queensland Government, 1975).*

The 1980s – A Changing Climate

During the 1980s, the [Public Safety Preservation Act](#) 1986 was established and provided certain powers for emergency commanders to assist with the resolution of ‘situations’. This included powers to direct and evacuate, close roads and direct others to assist. The Bureau of Emergency Services (the Bureau) was a division of the Qld Police Service. Fire services were provided through 81 local Fire Brigade Boards, with urban and rural services operating as separate organisations. [The Fire and Emergency Services Act](#) (FES Act) was proclaimed in 1990, creating a single statewide Qld Fire Service under a single Commissioner, and incorporating the Rural Fire Division. The FES Act s 2(a) provided for the prevention of, and response to, fires and other emergency incidents; (s. 2(c) established a framework for the management of the Qld Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and the State Emergency Service (SES). Chapter 3 of the FES Act established QFES and its functions.

The functions of the SES under the *FES Act* include but are not limited to: *'perform other activities to help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from an event or a disaster'* (s. 130(d)).

The 1990s – The decade for disasters

Internationally, the United Nations designated this decade as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, with the aim to reduce loss of life, property damage, and the social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters. In 1992 the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) was adopted at the UN headquarters in New York. In 1994, UN Member States, including Australia, adopted the [Yokoyama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World](#). The Yokoyama Strategy contained 10 principles from risk assessment, disaster prevention and preparedness, strengthening capacities to support mitigation, early warning services, environmental protection and sustainable development, and the support of vulnerable populations.

In Australia, [drought policy](#) was announced with associated financial assistance programmes. In Qld, a Public Sector Management Commission review of the Bureau of Emergency Services noted that: *the coordinating structure did not recognise the role of non-government agencies; departments need a clear legislative charter to ensure effective disaster management planning and coordination; and that the disaster planning function should be clearly separated from the SES function (Public Sector Management Commission, 1993)*. In 1993 the Qld Emergency Services (QES) was established. It replaced the Bureau and included a range of specialised support services – aviation, chemical hazards and emergency management units. A green paper released by the Qld Government drew attention to a range of perceived inadequacies with the SCDO of 1975, including that it did not incorporate the philosophy of the time underpinning disaster management; and that it was out of alignment with the departmental service delivery and administration structure (Queensland Bureau of Emergency Services, 1994). Further reviews at the time noted there was inadequate guidance on roles and responsibilities, a need to consider training, risk analysis, mitigation and public awareness as part of a broader disaster management strategy. Challenges with information flow within the system were identified and there were, alongside inconsistencies in the naming conventions for committees.

The [Australian and New Zealand Standard on Risk Management \(AS/NZS 4360:1995\)](#) was produced in 1995. The following year, Emergency Management Australia recommended to the states that risk management principles should be applied to natural disaster management principles and practises. In response to the standard, Qld developed the first guidance on applying risk management to disaster management – *disaster mitigation had become the principal objective of disaster management thinking at the time*.

The State Counter Disaster Plan comes together

In 1996, the QES was renamed the Department of Emergency Services (DES). Even though there was no requirement for a state-level disaster management plan in legislation, the DES produced the inaugural State Counter Disaster Plan for Qld (the SCDP) in 1996. The purpose of the plan was to *outline the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements for Queensland to ensure a coordinated effort by government departments, agencies, authorities and non-government bodies with a responsibility or capability in disaster management* (Emergency Services Division, 1996). The plan also reflected the disaster operational management system in place at the time. The SCDP contained nine principles:

1. *Disaster management is the responsibility of all levels of government.*
2. *Disaster management should utilise resources that exist for day-to-day purpose.*
3. *Organisations should function as an extension of their core business.*
4. *Individuals are responsible for their own safety including the need to be aware of the hazards that could affect their community and the counter disaster measures that are in place to deal with them.*
5. *Disaster planning to focus on large scale events as it is easier to scale down a response than it is to scale up if arrangements have been predicated on incident scale levels.*
6. *Disaster planning should recognise the difference between incidents and disasters, which are both quantitatively and qualitatively different.*
7. *Disaster management operational arrangements are in addition to and did not replace incident management operational arrangements;*
8. *Disaster planning must take account of topography and demography, the physical shape and size of a state or area and the spread of population must be considered when developing disaster plans to ensure that appropriate response mechanisms can be put in place in a timely manner.*
9. *Disaster management arrangements must recognise the involvement and role of non-government agencies.*

To achieve effective planning and coordinated operations, the SCDP:

- detailed the system of committees at State, Disaster District and Local Government level, supported by Emergency Services Division;
- under the SCDO, specified the roles and responsibilities of the:
 - Central Control Group
 - Disaster District Control Groups; and

- Local Government Counter Disaster Committees.
 - provided for the coordination of disaster-related planning, response and recovery by those government departments and agencies with a functional or hazard-specific disaster management role.
 - specified the roles and responsibilities of those advisory committees which have been allocated a role or responsibility in disaster management; and
 - specified responsibilities for annual reporting in relation to disaster management.

The SCDP also included for the first time an overview of functional and hazard-specific lead agencies and disaster plans. The lead agencies allocated responsibility for these functions and threats were responsible for the development and currency of supplementary disaster plans. These plans needed to be comprehensive and incorporate all the necessary information for lead agencies to affect comprehensive disaster management relative to the allocated function or threat. Functional plans included: Building Engineering Services; Communications; Emergency Supply; Community Recovery; Health; and Transport. Threat-specific plans included: bushfires; oil spills at sea; and exotic animal diseases.

The SCDP also included three state-level advisory committees, including the Queensland Tropical Cyclone Coordination Committee, the Queensland Earthquake Coordination Committee, and the Flood Warning Consultative Committee Qld. In 1999, the definition of a disaster was broadened in the [SCDO Act](#) to include industrial and infrastructure disasters, including failures in essential services and infrastructure systems, caused by any reason.

The 2000s – Reviews, Inquiries and Sendai

In Queensland, a Major Incidents Group was established in 2001. The Central Control group was supported by a State Disaster Coordination Group and the State Disaster Mitigation Committee, neither of which were recognised under legislation. A revised version of the State Plan was released in 2001, and provided a blueprint for the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery arrangements for disasters in Qld. The focus was on minimising the effects of disasters on local communities by ensuring a coordinated effort by state and local government, agencies, authorities and non-government bodies with a responsibility or capability in disaster management. The 2001 Plan had not been developed for the management of commonly occurring incidents which were within the capacity of individual combat agencies such the Qld Police Service; or major incidents which were within the capacity of nominated lead agencies with threat-specific roles, such for as oil spill. It was

noted that elements of the plan may, however, be activated in support of an agency responding to a major incident.

In 2002, the DES undertook a review of the SCDO. The response-focused philosophy of the SCDO Act *no longer represented best practise or reflected the current policies underlying disaster management in Qld, nationally or internationally* (Queensland Disaster Management Committee, 2015). The SCDO Act did not provide adequate guidance on the roles and responsibilities of some key elements of the disaster management system and was found to be more focused on process and structure than outcomes. The discussion paper proposed that new legislation should support structures, processes and powers that are required to address the consequences from both natural and non-natural events (Department of Emergency Services, 2003).

The Disaster Management Act is Passed

The review resulted in the introduction of the [Disaster Management Act](#) (the Act) in 2003. The main objectives of the Act were to:

- help communities mitigate the potential adverse effects of an event; and prepare for managing effects of an event;
- effectively respond to, and recover from, a disaster or an emergency situation;
- to provide for effective disaster management for the state; and
- to establish a framework for the management of the state emergency service and emergency service units to ensure the effective performance of their functions.

Under the Act, a **disaster** was defined as (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, 2003): *A serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an event, that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption. Serious disruption means: (a) loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; or (b) widespread or severe property loss or damage; or (c) widespread or severe damage to the environment. In this section — “serious disruption” means - (a) loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; or (b) widespread or severe property loss or damage; or (c) widespread or severe damage to the environment.*

Disaster management was defined as *arrangements for managing the potential adverse effects of an event, including, for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster.*

An **‘event’** meant any of the following -

- a) *a cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other natural happening;*
- b) *an explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, or a gas leak;*
- c) *an infestation, plague or epidemic; Example of an epidemic - a prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease*
- d) *a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure;*
- e) *an attack against the State;*
- f) *another event similar to an event mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (e).*

An 'event' may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions.

The new Act maintained the three-tiered system, locally led approach, and added the concepts of mitigation prevention, preparedness, response and recovery also known as the comprehensive or PPRR model. The Act streamlined the existing arrangements at the state level and replaced two state level committees, the State Counter Disaster Organisation and the Central Control Group, with a single peak disaster management policy and decision-making body called the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG). The SDMG was established under the Act as the key Qld body responsible for the development of disaster management policy.

At the district level, district disaster management groups replaced the existing disaster district control groups. At the local government level, the existing local government counter disaster committees, which were not mentioned in the SCDO, were replaced by formally established local disaster management groups. The Act established explicit functions for each of these disaster management groups, which included: disaster management policy making, disaster management planning, coordination across and between the levels in jurisdictions, the identification of resources, operational decision making and reporting on planning, effectiveness, operations and priorities. The Act provided for the appointment of executive officers at state, district and local group levels and detailed their functions. The Act also entrenched representation for each local government of an indigenous community council on the disaster district management group for their area. This was to ensure councils could participate in, and contribute to, disaster management at the district level through their membership of the district group.

The Act also legislated the preparation of a state disaster management plan and required that it be reviewed regularly. Disaster management plans were also required at each level of the system. In general, each plan was to include: the disaster management policy framework; roles and responsibilities; coordination of disaster operations; likely disaster events; and priorities for disaster management. The Act also provided for the development of guidelines to assist with disaster

management planning at all levels of the State to ensure plans were developed to a consistent standard. It also included the declaration of a disaster situation at the district level by the district coordinator, with the approval of the minister or state level by the minister for emergency services and the premier.

It was during this decade that the integration of land use planning and disaster management began. In 2003, the [*State Planning Policy Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Bushfire, Flood and Landslide \(SPP 1/03\)*](#) was released. It was developed by the DES in conjunction with the Department of Local Government and Planning and set out the State's interest in ensuring that natural hazards of flood, bushfire and landslide were adequately considered when making decisions about development. The government issued a position on development within hazardous areas: *the Qld government considers that development should minimise the potential adverse impacts of flood, bushfire and landslide on people, property, economic activity and the environment.*

In 2005, the DES released the *Qld Disaster Management Planning Guidelines 2005 for Local Government*. The intent of the guidelines was to assist local governments to plan for disaster situations and prepare mitigation strategies (Department of Emergency Services, 2005). It was accompanied by *the Operational Planning Guidelines for Local Disaster Management Groups*, the aim of which was to provide a systematic process to develop a functional operational planning regiment including, for example, templates, roles and responsibilities, coordination centres, evacuation centre management, and public information and warnings.

In 2005 the Qld Disaster Management Alliance (Alliance) was established between the LGAQ and the State of Qld. The Alliance provided a forum for discussion regarding disaster management; however, it did not provide guidance to the state and local governments on the management or support of the SES.

Under the Act, the SDMG had the legislative authority to develop a strategic policy framework (SPF) for disaster management in Qld. The first SPF, developed by the DES, was released in 2006 and established the vision for disaster management in line with Qld government priorities, and to set direction for the delivery of enhanced community safety and sustainability outcomes for the future. The intent of the SPF was to provide a strategic benchmark against which reporting an evaluation of outcomes could be undertaken. The SPF included general principles and a continuous improvement approach focused on eight elements, accompanied by strategies and key performance indicators including: disaster research policy and governance, disaster risk assessment, disaster mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster response, disaster relief and recovery, and post-disaster assessment.

In March 2006, [Severe Tropical Cyclone Larry](#) crossed the coast of far North Qld. The event caused widespread damage to an area estimated at over 17,000 square kilometres (ANSOG, 2008). Cyclone Larry triggered one of the most intensive relief operations in Qld's history. The Premier appointed a task force, led by Major General Peter Cosgrove, to provide oversight, and to help deliver the recovery programme to the far north (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2007).

[Amendments](#) in 2009 to the Act broadened the definition of a disaster to include bio-security events (Department of Emergency Services, 2009). This followed the activation of the disaster management system in support of citrus canker disease and equine influenza outbreaks across Qld. The O'Sullivan Review (O'Sullivan, 2009), conducted in 2009, found that the arrangements were effective but needed some *fine tuning*. The O'Sullivan Review reinforced the three-tiered, bottom-up approach as key foundations of the disaster management system but noted that the PPRR model should be strengthened in the legislation. The O'Sullivan Review also identified the need for a state-level coordinator, and definitions of key terms in the Act, including command, control and coordinate, as well as responsibilities associated with these. O'Sullivan stated that the SDMG could devote more non-disaster time to risk-based strategy and policy decisions and recommended strengthening the obligations of all relevant organisations under the Act.

The 2010s – Disaster Management, Resilience and Climate Change

Internationally during this decade, the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#) was adopted by 197 countries; The [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) forming the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) were introduced; and [the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 to 2030](#) was implemented. These three international frameworks and treaties had significant influence over the evolution of disaster and emergency management in Australia. In Qld, the SPF was updated to reflect: the outcomes of the review of Queensland's disaster management legislation and policy conducted in 2009, including amendments to the Act and agreed policy changes to the QDMA; and the Council of Australian Governments' resilience-based approach to natural disaster policy and programs adopted in December 2009 (National Emergency Management Committee, 2009). The reviewed SPF maintained the original eight elements.

This decade saw Qld significantly impacted by floods and cyclones, and the breakup of the comprehensive/PPRR model across different agencies. Severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi impacted North Qld and major flooding occurred through central and southern areas of the State. More than 99% of Qld had been impacted and disaster declared, and [Operation Queensland](#) was launched (Queensland Reconstruction Authority, 2011). Multi-agency state recovery subcommittees were also

established to support the implementation of Operation Queensland, focused on: human social, economic, environmental, building and roads and transport impacts, as well as community liaison and communication. Following the major flood events of 2010 and 2011 in Brisbane, the QRA was established under the [Qld Reconstruction Authority Act](#) (QRA Act) in 2015.

In 2011 the Qld Premier established an [Independent Commission of Inquiry](#) to examine the 2010/11 flood disaster. The [Terms of Reference](#) for the inquiry provided for an independent and thorough examination of the events leading to the floods, all aspects of the response to, and the subsequent flood aftermath of the 2010/11 event (Holmes, 2012).

The same year, the Commonwealth and Qld Governments entered into a national partnership arrangement for natural disaster reconstruction and recovery. The agreement identified that the QRA would: lead and oversee Qld flood and cyclone recovery operations; monitor and assess the progress of reconstruction programmes; monitor and assess the performance and delivery of the projects; report on the progress and delivery of recovery and reconstruction. The QRA soon after released *Operation Queensland: the State Community, Economic and Environmental Recovery and Reconstruction Plan 2011 to 13*. This was the start of a series of doctrine and guidelines to rebuild and support community resilience in Qld. During this decade, Australia's first betterment program was introduced by the QRA following severe Tropical Cyclone Oswald.

In 2011, the Disaster Management Cabinet Committee (DMCC) was established to make strategic decisions about the prevention, preparation, response and recovery for disaster events, and to build Qld's resilience to natural disasters. This DMCC replaced the State Emergency and Security Council which was established under the SDMP. The DMCC adopted a dual Chair model, chaired by the Premier during disaster response, and the Minister for Local Government for reconstruction, recovery and disaster resilience. A Chief Executive Officer Leadership Team Subcommittee for Community Recovery and Resilience was also established in 2011 to mirror the DMCC. The role of the committee was to coordinate the planning and implementation of whole-of-government recovery and resilience activities, in line with the Qld Recovery Plan 2013.

In 2012 the [Police and Community Safety Review](#) (PACSR) was initiated by the Minister for Police and Community Safety. The PACSR, undertaken by Michael Keelty, AO APM, identified issues with the application of legislation, and the need for clarity around roles, responsibilities and accountability (Keelty, 2013). Key concepts, such as community safety, remained undefined.

The PACSR further found: the system was siloed, with relationships both a positive and negative element; recommended the establishment of a permanent state disaster coordinator; transitioned

NDRA funding and the program responsibility to the QRA; identified the complexity of disaster district boundaries; noted that previous review recommendations had not been implemented or fully implemented in many cases, and observed that excessive reliance on control and command marginalised agencies that could contribute further (Keelty, 2013).

PACSR recommended a Department of Fire and Emergency Services be created through renaming and amending the existing Fire and Rescue Service Act. This included transferring sections of the Act that related to the SES and emergency service units into the FES Act. The QPS role in disaster management was reinforced, and the QFES role expanded to include prevention, response and elements of recovery. The PACSR also recommended the establishment of the position and Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM).

The role of the IGEM and the [Office of the IGEM](#) (the Office) were formalised through the Act in 2014. The Office was responsible for providing the premier, government and people of Qld an assurance of public safety, through the establishment and implementation of an assurance framework to direct, guide and focus work of all agencies, across all tiers of government to the desired outcomes of the disaster and emergency management arrangements for Qld. In 2014, the Office developed an [Emergency Management Assurance Framework or EMAF](#) and the accompanying [Standard for Disaster Management \(the Standard\)](#) in conjunction with representatives from the sector. The development of the EMAF and Standard was driven by five key objectives: outcomes over outputs focus; sector-centred development; improvement over compliance; integrated attributes to build disaster management effectiveness; and clarity of what is expected to achieve outcomes. The Standard outlined the way in which entities responsible for disaster management in the State undertake disaster management functions. The elements of the Standard are the basis for improving performance across the QDMA. The Standard was reviewed in 2021, adding Common Language as a Shared Responsibility.

The PACSR, O' Sullivan, 2005 Qld Audit Office Report and a review conducted by the Office of the IGEM identified areas for improvement in the governance arrangements of the SDMG. These recommendations included clarification of the role of the SDMG; the way in which advice and information are provided at SDMG meetings, and any associated risks; relationships and community page communication pathways with other disaster management groups committees and governance frameworks; accountability of the SDMG for disaster management doctrine; and linkages between the SDMG and other groups and committees.

Important changes to disaster management governance occurred in 2014/15, along with several significant disaster events. In particular, the Act was amended to institute the Queensland Disaster

Management Committee (QDMC), a Cabinet Committee established to make strategic decisions across the four phases of disaster management - PPRR. The Queensland Disaster Management Committee was formed by merging the former QDMC and the SDMG, to simplify the structure and allow a direct line of communication between the new QDMC, the State Disaster Coordinator and the State Recovery Coordinator.

In 2015, QFES began developing the [Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework](#) (the QERMF). The QERMF was endorsed by the QDMC in to provide consistent guidance in understanding disaster risk. Also in 2016, the QDMC progressed the development of a renewed SPF. The SPS identified six strategies to drive an effective disaster management system: ensure disaster operation capabilities are responsive and effective; build capacity, skills and knowledge to enable adaptation to changing environments; effectively collaborate and share responsibilities for disaster management across all levels of government, industry and communities; effectively communicate to engage all stakeholders in disaster management; incorporate risk-based planning into disaster management decision-making; and continuously improve disaster management through implementation of innovation, research and lessons learned.

In 2016 an operational review of the QRA (KPMG, 2015) was considered by the Qld parliament. The [Independent Review](#) recommendations included:

- *better articulation of the role of the QRA within the QDMA;*
- *that the QRA should participate in disaster management committees;*
- *sponsorship of statewide disaster resilience and mitigation, and coordinating disaster resilience and mitigation policy in Qld;*
- *sponsorship of statewide vulnerability and risk-based planning, specifically that the QRA should assume a lead sponsorship role for supporting statewide disaster vulnerability and risk-based planning within an all-hazards framework in partnership with relevant agencies; and*
- *stewardship of the whole-of-government disaster data collection and management, specifically that the QRA assumed stewardship for a central repository for the collection and storage of whole-of-government disaster management data and lessons learned to promote transparency, knowledge sharing, accountability and decision making.*

QFES developed Qld's first [State Natural Hazard Risk Assessment](#) in 2017, and the Department of Environment and Heritage released the [Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy \(Q-CAS\)](#). The Q-CAS centred around a partnership approach recognising that climate change is everybody's responsibility, and that a collaborative approach is needed to ensure resilience is embedded in Qld's diverse

economies, landscapes and communities. This was further embedded through the development of the [Emergency Services Sector Adaption Plan \(EM-SAP\)](#) by QFES in 2018.

In 2017, the QRA released the State wide Qld Recovery Plan, which became a sub-plan to the SDMP; published a revised [Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience](#); and launched Resilient Qld, Australia's first implementation plan for a state wide resilience strategy. An updated SDMP was released in 2018 and remains current as of 2023. The [SDMP 2018](#) version considered climate change, integrated the *QERMF* and the *State Hazard Risk Assessment*. It reiterated the disaster management principles outlined in the Act and reinforced the comprehensive model, all hazards and locally led approaches. The SDMP identified four priority areas that contributed to effective disaster management: risk management; planning; a local focus; and resilience. Supporting principles of the EMAF were also included to underpin disaster management in Qld. The partnership approach of the QDMA was reinforced. The 2018 SDMP included new chapters focused on resilience, disaster management research, and assurance activities.

The [Qld Disaster Resilience and Mitigation Investment Framework](#) was released by the QRA in 2019, to guide effective investment decision making and prioritisation of disaster resilience and mitigation activities across Qld. The [QRA Act](#) was also amended in 2019 to appoint the QRA with lead agency responsibility for disaster recovery, resilience and mitigation policy.

The 2020s – Today

The 2020s have been a decade of compounding and cascading complexity. In January 2020, Covid-19 arrived in Qld. The [RCNDA](#) was established in February 2020 to examine natural disaster management arrangements and legal frameworks for federal government involvement in responding to national emergencies. In 2020 the QRA also developed tailored recovery strategies for 11 regional areas, as part of a statewide recovery from COVID-19.

During 2020, Campbell Darby DSC AM, conducted his review of the SES (The Darby Report), prompted by a motion supported at the 2018 annual meeting of the Local Government Association of Qld (Darby, 2020). The intent of the motion was that the State assume full funding and governance of the SES. In reality the motion was a tipping point reflecting user frustration with arrangements that are viewed by many local governments as inequitable and lacking clarity. Previous reviews have indicated concerns regarding the State/Local/SES partnership, and shortcomings in managing and developing SES capability.

Nationally the National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRA) was established after the merger of the National Bushfire Recovery Agency and the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency. The NRRA transitioned to form the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) with Emergency Management Australia in 2022.

In July 2021, the Qld Government commissioned an independent review of QFES and its associated volunteer entities to ensure the long-term system sustainability of service delivery in outcomes for the Qld community and its safety (the Independent Review). In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Independent Review examined the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of QFES and its associated volunteer entities in the delivery of fire and emergency services in Qld (KPMG, 2021).

On 20 September 2022, the QRA released an updated strategy for disaster resilience, the [Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2022-27](#), and every region in Qld was part of a locally-led and regionally coordinated Regional Resilience Strategy.

The report from the Independent Review was released on 26 October 2022 and found (KPMG, 2021):

- *there is a need to continue modernising service delivery arrangements, simplify operational structures and, most importantly, focus scarce resources on activities that seek to ensure Queensland's fire and emergency services activities are best positioned to meet community requirements and the rapidly changing threat environment that exists*
- *to that end, this Review's recommendations set out a pathway for a more integrated and streamlined fire and emergency services organisation, with greater clarity in terms of its functional responsibilities, increased focus on core fire and rescue-related services, and a clearer role in relevant disaster management activities. In recognition of the dynamic nature of future challenges likely to be faced, the Review also establishes the basis for more transparent, certain and efficient funding arrangements for the new entity.*

On the same day, the Qld Government announced its response to the Independent Review. On the 14th of December, consistent with the recommendations of the independent review, the Government requested that the IGEM conduct a review of the QDMA to inform any changes to the arrangements, legislative reforms, or any updates to the SDMP. The IGEM review, the [Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements Review 2022-23](#), will also inform the transition of disaster management functions to the QPS and other relevant agencies.

PRESENT

Current Disaster Management Arrangements in Australia

There is a relatively consistent tiered approach to the broader governance “framework” within today’s Australian disaster management environment. Committees and groups operate in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, and Qld. Legislation establishes key groups and committees, defining their purpose, functions, and parameters within which the disaster management arrangements operate. State and territory governments have responsibility for the protection of life, property and the environment in their jurisdictions, and are responsible for prevention and preparedness activities to mitigate risk and the impact of crises (Elphick, 2020). The Australian Government:

- provides financial assistance and planning support to states and territories to assist prevention and preparedness activities, including crisis management exercises
- provides national leadership and coordination on policy and capability through Australian Government supported/sponsored capabilities
- facilitates annual high-risk weather season preparedness briefings
- facilitates national scenario-based preparedness exercises.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is responsible for maintaining and updating the [Australian Government Crisis Management Framework](#) (AGCMF). Version 3.2 of the AGCMF was released in November 2022, to ensure that arrangements which set out the Australian Government’s response to emergencies and natural disasters were up to date in preparation for the 2022-2023 high-risk weather season (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2022).

The AGCMF outlines *the Australian Government’s approach to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crises. The Australian Government seeks to manage risks holistically using an ‘all-hazards’ approach that includes mitigating, planning, and assisting states and territories, where appropriate, in managing emergencies resulting from a combination of* (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2022):

- **natural events** – including, but not limited to, bushfires, cyclonic or severe storms, floods, earthquakes, space weather, asteroid or extra-terrestrial body impacting on the earth, pandemics and other biosecurity incidents, tsunamis and globally and regionally significant volcanic eruptions.

- **human-induced events** – including but not limited to cyberattacks, space junk, malicious critical infrastructure sabotage or kinetic terrorism or bioterrorism, and non-naturally occurring radiological or other wide area environment contamination events. This does not include events such as human protests or industrial workforce activities.

The AGCMF provides ministers and senior officials with guidance on their respective roles and responsibilities. It also sets out the arrangements that link ministerial responsibility to the work of key officials, committees, and facilities.

The Australian Government identifies [seven phases of crisis management and recovery](#) (Department of Home Affairs, 2020) (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2022). Some crisis events may not include all seven phases. It is also possible for phases to overlap, be considered simultaneously, or to have multiple lines of effort within a single phase. The phases are (Department of Home Affairs, 2020):

- **prevention** – measures to eliminate or reduce the severity of a hazard or crisis.
- **preparedness** – arrangements to ensure that, should a crisis occur, the required resources, capabilities and services can be efficiently mobilised and deployed.
- **response** – actions taken in anticipation of, during, or immediately after a crisis to ensure that its impacts are minimised, and that those affected are supported as quickly as possible.
- **relief** – meeting the essential needs of food, water, shelter, energy, communications, and medicines for people affected by a crisis event.
- **recovery** – short and medium-term measures to restore or improve the livelihoods, health, economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets, systems, and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and ‘build back better’¹ to avoid or reduce future disaster risk.
- **reconstruction** – implementing longer-term strategies post-incident to ‘build back better’ from a crisis, including identifying sustainable development approaches and mitigation measures that may be applicable beyond the directly affected community.
- **risk reduction** – reducing future risk and identifying measures that may be taken to reduce the impact of future crises.

¹ ‘Build back better’ is a catch all phrase to describe reconstruction, restoration and future planning efforts that adopt the latest scientific and professional advice, and which incorporate key lessons learned from the crisis in question and/or other similar crises.

Disaster Management Arrangements in Queensland

Qld's current, as of April 2023, disaster management arrangements are characterised by, and implemented through, strong partnerships between government, government-owned corporations, NGOs, commerce and industry sectors and the local community. The arrangements recognise and promote collaboration to ensure comprehensive disaster management through the effective coordination of disaster risk planning, services, information and resources.

The QDMA is comprised of a suite of documents, that together provide the platform for Disaster Management in Queensland (see Figure 2, page 50).

The Act and the Disaster Management Regulation 2014 (the Regulation) form the legislative basis for disaster management within all levels of government and Qld's disaster management arrangements. All events, whether natural or caused by human activity, should be managed in accordance with the Act, Queensland Disaster Management 2016 SPS, the Standard, the SDMP, district and local disaster management plans and any relevant disaster management guidelines. Under s 4A of the Act, disaster management in Qld is based on four principles:

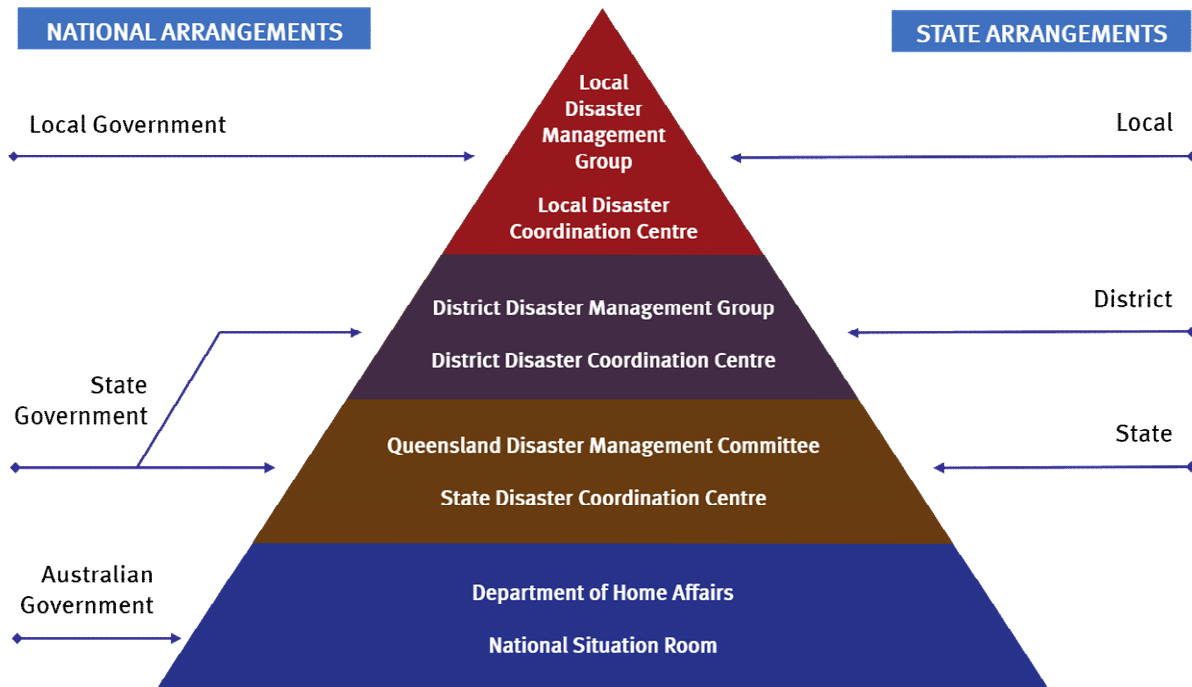
- the comprehensive approach comprising four phases including prevention, preparedness, *response* and *recovery* (PPRR) to ensure a balance between the reduction of risk and the enhancement of community resilience, while ensuring effective response and recovery capabilities.
- all hazards approach assumes that the functions and activities used to manage one event are likely to be applicable to a range of events, whether natural or caused by human activity.
- local disaster management capability is recognised as the frontline for disaster management, primarily due to the benefits of localised knowledge and networks. As per s. 4A(c) of the Act, local governments are primarily responsible for managing events in their local government areas (LGAs) and this is provided through their LDMG.
- support by the state group and district groups to local governments.

Qld's disaster management arrangements comprise a four-tiered system: three levels of government – local, state and federal – and an additional state government tier between local and state levels known as disaster districts. Disaster districts enable a more efficient and effective operational service delivery in support of local communities, and address the size, complexity and diversity of Qld.

Figure 2 - QDMA documents



Figure 3 – Queensland Disaster Management Structure



Qld's disaster management arrangements enable a progressive escalation of support and assistance through the four tiers. These arrangements comprise several key management and coordination structures for achieving effective disaster management in Qld. The management and coordination structures are:

- **Disaster management groups** that operate at local, district and state levels and are responsible for the planning, organisation, coordination and implementation of all measures to mitigate/prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster events.
- **Coordination centres** at local, district and state levels that support disaster management groups in coordinating information, resources and services necessary for disaster operations.
- **Disaster management plans and planning**, developed to ensure appropriate disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery at local, district and state levels.
- **Functional lead agencies** through which the disaster management functions, and responsibilities of the state government, are managed and coordinated.
- **Hazard-specific primary agencies**, responsible for the management and coordination of combating specific hazards.

- **Specific-purpose committees**, either permanent or temporary, established under the authority of disaster management groups for specific purposes relating to disaster management.

Local governments – through their respective LDMGs – have primary responsibility to manage a disaster at the community level. Accordingly, they are responsible for the development and implementation of their Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP). If local government identify gaps in their capacity or capability to manage a potential disaster and require additional resources to manage an event, they can request support from their DDMG. This allows for the rapid mobilisation of resources at a local, district or regional level. If district resources are insufficient or inappropriate, requests for assistance can be passed to the state via the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC). If state resources prove insufficient or inappropriate, Australian Government support can be sought through the NEMA that sits within the Department of Home Affairs.

Under Qld's disaster management arrangements, the state is divided into 23 disaster districts. Each district comprises one or more LGAs. Each disaster district performs the function of providing coordinated state government support when required and requested by local governments through their LDMGs. The Act establishes a DDMG for each disaster district. DDMGs are responsible to the state government, through the QDMC, for all aspects of disaster management capabilities and capacity for their district.

Disaster Management Committees and Groups

The Qld Disaster Management Committee (QDMC)

The QDMC provides senior strategic leadership in relation to Queensland's disaster management across all four phases – *prevention, preparedness, response and recovery* – and facilitates communication between the Premier, relevant Ministers and Directors-General before, during and after disasters (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, 2018a). The functions of the QDMC are outlined in s 18 of the Act. Membership of the QDMC is outlined in the Regulation and generally comprises persons prescribed by the Regulation, and other persons invited by the Chairperson of the QDMC. The QDMC is chaired by the Premier. The functions of the Chair of the QDMC are:

- manage and coordinate the business of the QDMC

- ensure, as far as practicable, that the QDMC performs its functions.

The Deputy Premier is the Deputy Chairperson of the QDMC. The Deputy Chairperson is to act as Chairperson during a vacancy in the office of the Chairperson, or during all periods of absence or inability to perform the functions of the office.

The State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG)

The purpose of the State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG) *has evolved from operationalising strategic decisions made by the QDMC to include providing the QDMC with strategic support for disaster related policy. Disaster related policy includes review recommendations, Royal Commission findings and disaster management policies at state and national levels (Queensland Government, 2021).* The four phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery are led by three co-Chairs across three agencies (KPMG, 2021). It is important to recognise that these phases may overlap depending on the situation. QFES as the lead agency for disaster management will chair Ordinary meetings to coordinate whole-of-government input into disaster management planning, strategies and policies, and a coordinated approach to Prevention and Preparedness phases. Agencies may wish to provide policy content experts at the Ordinary meetings. In the *Response* phase, QPS is the lead agency and will chair extraordinary meetings, reacting to the current situation and ensuring decisions by the QDMC are implemented and supported by agencies. During the recovery phase, QRA is the lead agency, supporting the transition from response to recovery. This transition incorporates the State Recovery Coordinator and the Functional Recovery Groups (FRGs). The recovery phase will be considered in either an Ordinary or Extraordinary meeting rather than a specific recovery-focused meeting; governance will transfer to FRGs at the appropriate time.

Recovery Governance

Leadership Board Sub-committee (Recovery)

The Leadership Board Sub-committee (Recovery) oversees the implementation of state disaster-specific recovery plans and develops strategies to manage risks that may affect recovery operations. The Leadership Board Sub-Committee:

- provides oversight on the planning and implementation of the state's whole-of-community recovery activities regarding the disaster, across the functional lines of recovery, as detailed in the disaster-specific recovery plans
- provides the mechanism to manage and coordinate the recovery activities of FRGs, including cross-cutting issues
- identifies issues for resilience and recovery and canvases policy solutions across the FRGs that are not in the state-level recovery plan
- pre-empts and raises emerging issues highlighted by the FRGs and/or the State Recovery Coordinator (SRC), and escalates to the Leadership Board and/or QDMC through the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC) for action, as required
- provides assurance and monitoring of recovery efforts for the impacts of the disaster
- reports on recovery activities to the QDMC
- ensures FRGs contribute actively to the development of the recovery plan, in partnership with the QRA.

Functional Recovery Groups

FRGs are responsible for supporting the delivery of recovery efforts across impacted communities by leveraging existing partnerships between local and state governments to ensure close collaboration and coordination during the management of recovery activities. FRGs report to the Leadership Board, or the Leadership Board Sub-committee (Recovery) when established, which in turn reports to the QDMC Chair or delegated Minister.

Human and Social Functional Recovery Group

Human and social recovery relates to the emotional, social, physical and psychological health and well-being of individuals, families and communities following a disaster. The Human and Social Functional Recovery Group is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy. The Human and Social Recovery Group aims to address:

- access to timely information
- assistance to reconnect with families, friends and community networks
- enabling people to manage their own recovery through access to information and a range of services and/or practical assistance, including financial assistance for those individuals and households who are most vulnerable and do not have the means to finance their own recovery

- access to emotional, psychological and mental health support at individual, family and community levels (psychosocial support), and
- assistance to maintain a sense of equilibrium in life and move forward into a changed reality.

Economic Functional Recovery Group

The effects of a disaster on the economic environment can be classified in terms of direct and indirect impacts. The tangible impacts can usually be given a monetary value and may include loss of tourism, employment opportunities and reduction in cash flow for businesses. The Economic Functional Recovery Group is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

Environment Functional Recovery Group

The effects of a disaster on the natural environment may be a direct result of the disaster, or through a secondary impact or flow on from the disaster response or recovery process. Impacts to the environment may include damage or loss of flora and fauna, poor air quality, reduced water quality, land degradation and contamination, or damage to heritage-listed places. The Environment Functional Recovery Group is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Science.

Building Functional Recovery Group

The effects of a disaster on the built environment often result in damage and disruption, which inhibits the capacity of essential services such as housing, accommodation, education and health facilities. The Building Functional Recovery Group is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Energy and Public Works.

Road and Transport Functional Recovery Group

The effects of a disaster on transport networks, including road, rail, aviation and maritime normally result in difficulty accessing communities and disruption to critical supply chains (both within and outside of the impacted area). Restoration of these networks, or the identification of alternatives, is a priority in disaster recovery. The Roads and Transport Functional Recovery Group is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Local Recovery Groups

Local Recovery Groups are at varying maturity levels across the state, and substantial support has been provided to Qld's local governments to assist them to establish groups and their associated

recovery plans. There are currently 51 Local Recovery Groups in Queensland and 54 Local Recovery Plans.

Key Roles in the QDMA

State Disaster Coordinator

The State Disaster Coordinator (SDC) is a legislated position under s 21B of the Act. The SDC is appointed by the Chairperson of the QDMC, in consultation with the Commissioner QPS, and must be a Deputy Commissioner of QPS, or other suitably experienced person. The functions of the SDC are to coordinate disaster response operations, report to the QDMC, implement strategic decisions and provide advice on disaster response operations to district disaster coordinators.

State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator

The Chief Executive Officer of the QRA is the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC). The role of the SRPPC is to (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, 2018a):

- *stand as State Recovery Coordinator (SRC)*
- *engage collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure recovery activities provide the best outcomes for the people of Queensland in terms of timeliness, quality of service and advice to government*
- *ensure better preparedness of government entities and the community for recovery operations*
- *lead recovery planning, policy and recovery capability development to ensure effective recovery operations and coordination*
- *oversee the effective delivery of relief and immediate recovery operations until a SRC is appointed*
- *facilitate the provision of local recovery planning and operations support, when requested by the impacted LDMGs/LRGs*
- *ensure continual improvements in disaster recovery policies, procedures and planning*
- *oversee state-level preparedness for recovery operations*
- *manage and resource a newly appointed SRC and be available for consultation with the SRC/Deputy SRCs throughout the duration of their appointment*

- *attend QDMC and State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG) meetings, and liaise with the State Disaster Coordinator (SDC) in the lead up to a disaster (if possible) and during disaster response operations*
- *work with the SDC to ensure seamless transition from response operations to recovery operations*
- *work with stakeholders to collaboratively implement the delivery of resilience building measures and ongoing resilience continuous improvement*
- *ensure a review of disaster recovery operations is conducted after an event*

State Recovery Coordinator

The State Recovery Coordinator (SRC) is a legislated position under s 21D of the Act. The SRC works with communities affected by disaster events. The Premier, as the Chair of the QDMC, can appoint an SRC who engages and supports impacted communities throughout recovery. The SRC:

- *coordinates the disaster recovery operations for the state group*
- *reports regularly to the state group about disaster recovery operations*
- *ensures, as far as reasonably practicable, that any strategic decisions about disaster recovery operations are implemented*
- *provides strategic advice on disaster recovery operations to government agencies.*

QRA's recovery team supports the SRC.

Disaster Management Functional Lead Agencies, Hazard-Specific Agencies and Plans

State Government agencies and organisations have designated responsibilities in disasters which reflect their legislated and/or technical capability and authority, with respect to hazards, functions and/or activities of disaster management (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, 2022). These responsibilities are outlined in the SDMP.

Functional Lead Agencies

The functions of disaster management are those functions essential to managing the consequences of events and their impact. They are services-centric, enduring and are applicable to all hazards across all levels of the QDMA. They provide a guide to the services required before, during and after the

impacts of a disaster. Functional lead agencies are allocated responsibility to prepare for, and provide, an allocated function, and may be required to provide support to other functions. Disaster management functions help to define the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in disaster operations. Although the roles and titles of agencies may change, the functions of disaster management will provide a constant point of reference to disaster managers at all levels.

Hazard-Specific Primary Agencies

In addition to functional lead agency responsibilities, Qld has identified a number of specific hazards where government departments and agencies have a designated primary agency role. These primary agencies are allocated responsibility to prepare for, and to combat, the specific hazards based on their legislated and/or technical capability and authority. The disaster management arrangements in Qld coordinate resources in support of primary agency operations, as required, but remain responsible for the wider management of the consequences of the specific hazard. Representatives of hazard-specific primary agencies are members of the State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG) and are represented at district and local disaster management groups as required.

Disaster Management Plans

In accordance with s 49 of the Act, the QDMC must prepare a State Plan outlining disaster management for the State. The SDMP establishes the framework, arrangements and practices that enable disaster management in Qld. It includes guidance for disaster management stakeholders through the provision of commentary and directions to supporting documents such as plans, strategies or guidelines. The SDMP highlights significant elements of disaster management which are important to all Queenslanders. To achieve this, various definitions, principles and functions have been reproduced from relevant legislation, guidelines and policy documents.

The SDMP makes provision for the following, as prescribed by the Act:

- *Queensland Disaster Management 2016 SPS*
- *the roles and responsibilities of entities involved in disaster operations and disaster management for the state*
- *the coordination of disaster operations and activities relating to disaster management, performed by those who have roles and responsibilities*
- *events that are likely to happen in the state*
- *outline the priorities for disaster management for the state*

- *matters stated in disaster management guidelines are also matters included in this plan*
- *any other matters the QDMC considers appropriate or are prescribed by the Disaster Management Regulation 2014.*

Section 51 of the Act states that the QDMC may review, or renew, the SDMP when the group considers it appropriate.

Traditionally the Secretariat of the QDMC has been responsible for coordinating the update of the SDMP on behalf of the Chair. The current review of the SDMP is being led by QFES via an agreement with QPS. The SDMP is to be provided to each DDMG and LDMG and is to be available for inspection by members of the public, free of charge, at the department's Head Office, on the department's website, and at other places the Chair considers appropriate. In accordance with s 16C of the Act, the Office of the IGEM has been delegated the legislative responsibility to ensure that local, district and state plans remain effective, monitor their implementation and support their review.

District Plans

The Act requires that each DDMG prepare a disaster management plan for its disaster district. District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs) detail the arrangements within the disaster district to provide whole-of-government planning and coordination capability to support local governments in disaster management. A DDMP should be developed in consideration of the local disaster management plans in the district to ensure the potential hazards and risks relevant to that area are incorporated. It should outline steps to mitigate the potential risks, as well as response and recovery strategies.

In accordance with s 55 of the Act, a DDMG may review or renew its plan when the group considers it appropriate. However, the DDMG must review the effectiveness of the plan at least once a year through, for example, exercises and/or operational activities. In addition to annual exercises or operational activities, it is recommended that a district plan assessment be conducted once every two years.

Local Plans

All local governments in Qld must, under s 57 of the Act, prepare a disaster management plan for their local government area. The development of a Local Disaster Management Plan (LDMP) should be based on the comprehensive, all hazards approach to disaster management, incorporating all aspects of PPRR and specific provisions under s 57 and s 58 of the Act. It should outline steps to mitigate the potential risks, as well as response and recovery strategies.

The plans are to be made available to the relevant DDMGs and are to be available for inspection by members of the public, free of charge, at the local government head office, on the local government's website and other places the Chief Executive Officer of the local government considers appropriate (the Act s 60). In accordance with s 59 of the Act, an LDMG may review or renew its plan when the group considers it appropriate. However, the LDMG must review the effectiveness of the plan at least once a year through, for example, exercises and/or operational activities.

Training

The requirement for the provision and undertaking of disaster management training is stipulated in several disaster management doctrines:

- Section 16A(c) of the Act provides a legislative requirement for the Chief Executive of the Act (currently the Commissioner, QFES) to ensure that persons performing functions under the Act in relation to disaster operations are appropriately trained.
- The SDMP also outlines the requirement for the QFES Chief Executive to ensure that persons performing functions under the Act in relation to disaster operations are appropriately trained.
- The Standard recognises training as a key component of the 'people' accountability and further identifies training as a key indicator of capability integration.

There are multiple pathways to build capability within the disaster management sector – foundational training developed through the Qld Disaster Management Training Framework (QDMTF), professional development through accreditation, exercising and on-the-job experience, and academic qualifications through tertiary institutions. The current focus is maintaining foundational training through the QDMTF.

The QDMTF provides *“a standard foundation level of knowledge and understanding for disaster management stakeholders”* as required under s 16A(c) of the Act. The QDMTF supports the induction and delivery of core training to all individuals with a current role or function within the QDMA. Stakeholders include officers at local, state and federal government level, non-government organisations and volunteer groups.

The current QDMTF provides for training delivery to occur across the multiple course offerings and provides a contemporary model to support regular updating of training content (modules) through

established training governance frameworks and working groups, rather than through RTO compliance in all instances.

Assurance

Part 1A of the Act establishes the IGEM and Office of the IGEM (the Office). The purpose for the Office is to lead continuous improvement in disaster management. The functions of the Office are detailed in s 16C of the Act.

The EMAF, developed by the Office in partnership with disaster management practitioners, provides the foundation for guiding and supporting the continuous improvement of entities' programs across all phases of disaster management. The EMAF also provides the structure and mechanism for reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of disaster management arrangements.

The EMAF is comprised of principles, the Standard and assurance activities. Assurance activities are undertaken to assess performance against the Standard, legislation, policy, good practice guidelines and entity performance indicators to provide a level of assurance of disaster management effectiveness.

FUTURE

Outcome of the review of the QDMA

The Review has provided a narrative of the complex environment within which disasters have been and are managed today. COVID-19 added new dimensions of complexity, interconnectedness and vulnerability; biohazards, climate change, cyber security and polycrises pose additional, unfamiliar challenges.

The concept of VUCA (*volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity*) no longer adequately provides an answer to the projected 'chaos' of the future, which includes BANI (*brittle, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible*) impacts on society (Kraaijenbrink, 2022). Looking forward, the QDMA will require disaster risk management through adaptive systems and governance that can anticipate and absorb the unfamiliar, provide stability in a complicated world, and leverage new opportunities, networks and partnerships.

With the frequency and intensity of disaster events in [Queensland continuing to increase](#), the past few years have highlighted the growing need for a cross-organisational body to oversee the coordination of 'all hazards' resilience activities in Queensland.

Currently, Queensland has strong governance arrangements, with the QDMA clearly outlining state-, district- and local-level functions in relation to the *Response* phase of any hazard. Within the *Response* phase there are clear roles, resourced positions, clear governance and largely effective arrangements. *Recovery* is rapidly maturing. In contrast the stakeholders identified that *Prevention and Preparedness* have less structured and less mature arrangements despite their importance.

Synopsis

As noted previously in this report the Governments proposed machinery of government changes have committed to the QPS having primary responsibility for disaster management functions, pending this review findings and recommendations. During the review it was noted that feedback from the agencies and partners regarding the proposed change was overwhelmingly positive. The IGEM supports the appointment of the Commissioner of Police as the Chief Executive of the Act. The timing of the appointment should be decided by the RIT. It is suggested that the Act be amended to specifically identify the Commissioner of Police as the Chief Executive. This could be done either by creating a new section or inserting a definition of the Chief Executive in the Schedule Dictionary of the Act. Alternatively, or in the interim pending legislative change, this could be done by way of an Administrative Arrangements Order.

Recommendation

1. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management legislation:
 - a. That the Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service be appointed as the Chief Executive, of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

This review has identified that, with some adjustments, a more streamlined and collegiate approach can embed Resilience throughout PPRR. This proposal requires legislative change, changes to the Terms of Reference for the QDMC and SDCG, as well as modifications to the State Disaster Management Plan. There are two new groups proposed; the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) and the State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG), which will require the development of relevant Terms of Reference, should this concept be accepted.

The proposed changes allow the QDMC to focus on leading and providing strategic direction for the state. It will be agile and adaptable, meeting as required. Responsibility for developing and adjusting governance for disaster management in the state will transfer to the re-introduced SDMG.

It is proposed that the SDMG will manage the business of disaster management for the state on behalf of the QDMC. When the QDMC convenes the SDMG will be absorbed into the QDMC, supporting the Premier and Ministers. When the QDMC deactivates, the SDMG re-forms as necessary. Briefings for the Premier and Ministers (via their Directors-General) will occur as a matter of course in day-to-day business activities.

In conducting the review, feedback was received from multiple entities that there may be some confusion arising as to who has responsibility for disaster events where there is no hazard lead agency nominated in the State Disaster Management Plan.

The current [State Disaster Management Plan](#) at 7.2.4 (pages 38 to 39) identifies in part, “*hazard specific plans are developed when particular hazards have distinct operational or coordination requirements (e.g., animal and plant disease, bushfire, pandemic)*”. The plans referred to address the actions across all phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery with the support of the broader disaster management arrangements. The agencies identified with such a responsibility are also required to engage with their Commonwealth partners who also have a national responsibility in these areas.

The current State Disaster Management Plan at pages 38 and 39 identifies hazard specific plans for specific hazards and the primary agency that has responsibility for the hazard. Currently, the State Disaster Management Plan identifies the following hazards and primary agencies.

Hazard	Primary Agency
Animal and plant disease	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
Biological (human related)	Queensland Health
Radiological	Queensland Health
Heatwave	Queensland Health
Pandemic	Queensland Health
Bushfire	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Chemical	QFES
Ship Sourced Pollution	DTMR
Terrorism	Queensland Police Service (QPS)

The QDMA is based on the primacy of local governments who lead for hazards in their respective areas. Part 1.3.3 of the current State Disaster Management Plan (2018, page 4) states, “*Local*

governments are primarily responsible for managing events in their local government area through their Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)". Further "LDMGs are empowered by legislation to act as the frontline of disaster management in Queensland. This work is undertaken from a perspective of shared responsibility among all stakeholders and is characterised by consultation, collaboration and participation. LDMGs are supported by district and state level groups, as well as relevant state departments, statutory bodies, essential service providers and non-government organisations".

Section 4A of the Act provides guiding principles that speak to the importance of locally led, regionally coordinated, state-facilitated and Commonwealth-supported approaches.

Finding: if the event is not one of the identified hazards and no primary agency is identified then section 4A (c) and (d) of the Act apply.

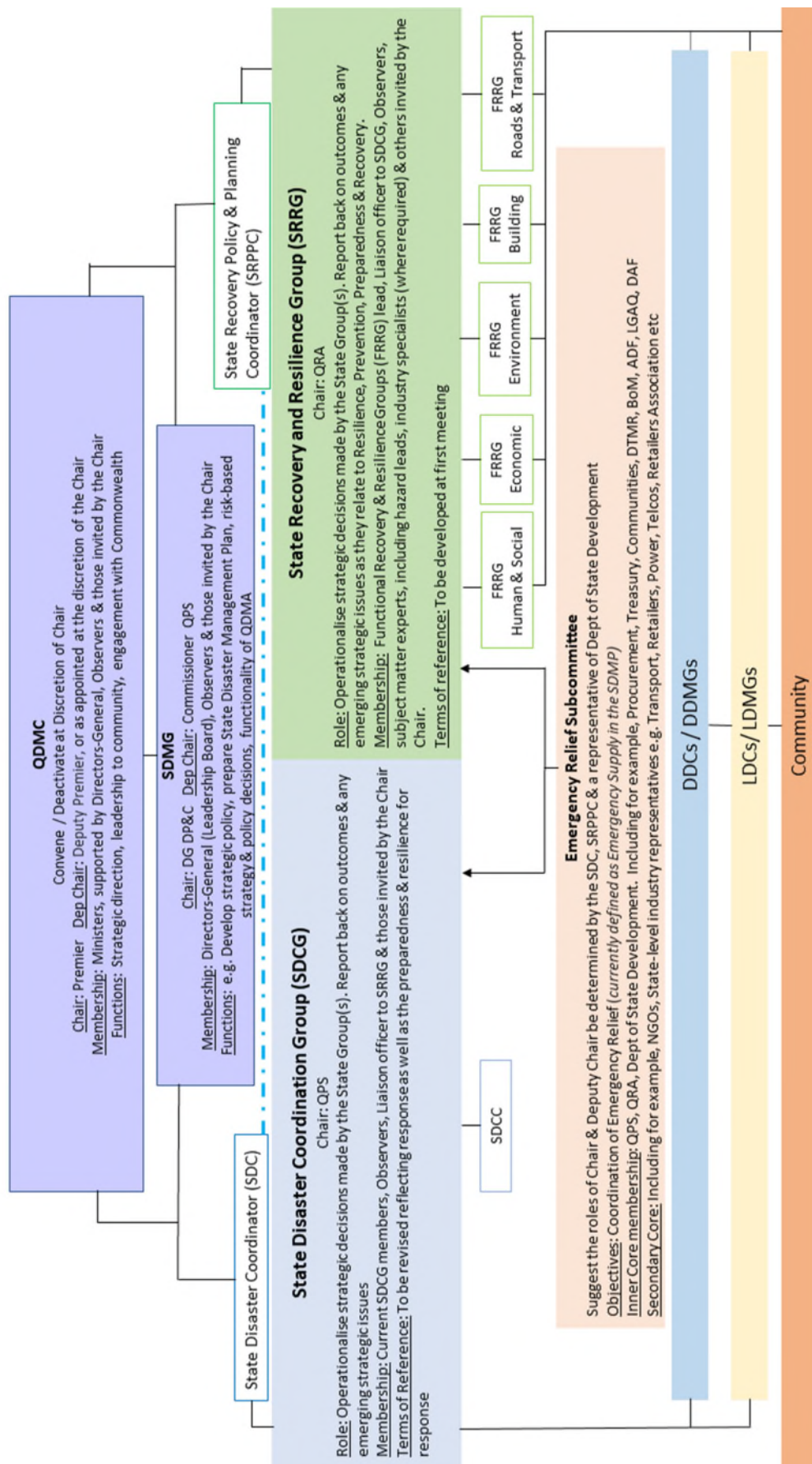
The roles of the SDC and the SRPPC remain with reporting lines to the SDMG, and to the QDMC when it is convened (refer to the schematic on page 65). The SDC is supported by the SDCG and the SRPPC is supported by the SRRG. Additionally, the proposed organisation structure shows a collegiate relationship between the SDC and SRPPC.

It is recommended that the State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG) revert to a single chair arrangement, focussed on response and the aspect of preparedness for response.

The membership of the SDCG should remain unchanged, that is, government agencies, NGO's, public utilities, observers and invited guests. The Terms of Reference should also be amended to remove a previously introduced policy responsibility, which mirrored existing and well-established inter-departmental processes. The existing statewide inter-departmental policy process becomes the mechanism for introducing disaster management policy.

To support the SDCG and the SRRG in the aspect of emergency supply, it is proposed that a different approach be taken than in the past where a single responsible agency was nominated to deliver on all aspects of emergency supply. It is recommended that this function be referred to as 'Emergency Relief', in line with Outcome 10 of the Standard. It is further recommended that a subcommittee of the SDCG and SRRG be established; arrangements for the chair and deputy chair of this subcommittee should be discussed between the QPS, QRA and DSDILGP. These three agencies should develop a joint strategy for the provision of emergency relief.

Figure 4 – Proposed revised draft structure at State Level within Queensland’s Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA)



Queensland Disaster Management Committee (QDMC)

The QDMC is the important leadership and strategic direction committee for Queensland in times of significant events and disasters. The membership cohort of the QDMC is Ministers, supported by Directors-General, observers and those invited by the Chair, with the suggested inclusion of the Chair of the Government's Crisis Communication Network (CCN) as an observer.

The proposed adjustment is that the QDMC is activated at the direction of the Chair when the state starts to posture towards an event, and it is determined that the strategic leadership of the QDMC needs to be engaged.

When the QDMC is convened the Chair of the SDMG returns responsibility for strategic direction and leadership to the Chair of the QDMC.

The QDMC is stood down at the discretion of the Chair and responsibility for ongoing strategic direction is transferred to the Chair of the SDMG, who appraises the Chair of the QDMC on the ongoing management of the event.

It is proposed that the revised functions of the QDMC are to:

- provide strategic leadership across the QDMA and the State
- provide supportive leadership to, and in, the community
- establish and maintain engagement between the State and the Commonwealth relating to achieving the strategic outcomes pertaining to effective disaster management. For example, National Cabinet, as well as at Ministerial level
- facilitate the coordination of State and Commonwealth assistance for disaster management and disaster operations
- facilitate the provision of resources where necessary, in and outside the state
- strategic level point of contact for the Consular Corps within Australia.

The Cabinet process has not been incorporated intentionally and sits outside and above this proposed structure.

It is suggested that the Act be amended to reflect the change in the QDMC's functions and responsibilities.

Members of the QDMC and SDMG should receive executive level training that is relevant to their role and functions that reflect the QDMA responsibilities of their portfolio and leadership position. The executive training is to be provided by senior departmental officers within their portfolios. The new CEO of the DMA be responsible for the harmonisation of content and consistency.

Recommendation

1. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management legislation:
 - b. That the *Disaster Management Act 2003* be amended to reflect the new role and function of the Queensland Disaster Management Committee.

The State Disaster Management Group (SDMG)

The SDMG is an important leadership committee that provides strategic leadership whenever the QDMC is not convened. The SDMG is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), the Deputy Chair is the Commissioner of QPS (who is the responsible Chief Executive for the Disaster Management Act). The SDMG is comprised of the same representation as the QDMC (excluding Ministers), observers and those invited by the Chair, with the suggested inclusion of Chair of the Governments Crisis Communications Network as a member.

The SDMG should meet regularly throughout the year and deliver the business-as-usual functions previously undertaken by the QDMC.

In circumstances where a severe, significant event or potential disaster is likely to occur, it is recommended that the Chair of the SDMG brief the Chair of the QDMC. Should the Chair of the QDMC decide that the QDMC will move to 'stand up' then a phased handover would occur and the members of the SDMG adjust to support their Ministers.

It is suggested that the function of the SDMG is to support the QDMC by:

- Developing a strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State
- Ensuring effective disaster management is developed and implemented for the State
- Ensuring arrangements between the State and the Commonwealth about matters relating to effective disaster management are established and maintained
- Identifying resources in, and outside, the State that may be used for disaster operations
- Providing reports and making recommendations to the Minister about matters relating to disaster management and disaster operations
- Preparing the State Disaster Management Plan
- Establishing and maintaining effective officer-level arrangements between the State and the Commonwealth across the various portfolios of the Directors-General
- Decision making in respect to risk-based strategy and policy decisions
- Performing other functions given to the group under this or another Act

- Performing a function incidental to a function mentioned in paragraphs above.

It is suggested that the secretariat and executive officer to the QDMC remain with the QPS and support both the QDMC and the SDMG.

It is recommended that the Act be amended to create the SDMG and prescribe the role and functions of the SDMG.

The functions currently sitting with the QDMC in s 18(a)(b)(e)(f) of the Act should transition to the SDMG and should include a mirroring of the current s 18(h) and (i). It is suggested for consistency that there also be a mirroring of current ss 19 to 21A inclusive, save s 20B.

There will need to be a number of minor amendments to the Act to reflect the transfer of other functions from the QDMC to the SDMG, for example the sections of the Act dealing with the responsibility for the State Disaster Management Plan.

Recommendation

1. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management legislation:
 - c. That a State Disaster Management Group is established within the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.

State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG)

Originally the State Disaster Coordination Group reported to the SDC and implemented strategic decisions from the QDMC. The SDCG reported back on the outcomes of this, and any emerging strategic issues, to the SDC.

Since its inception the SDCG has had numerous amendments to its Terms of Reference, including the provision of three Co-Chairs, covering PPRR, addition of policy development, and sub-dividing its membership through selective invitation depending on the type or purpose of the meeting.

It is recommended that the SDCG current membership cohort remain unchanged including observers, public utilities and those invited by the Chair, with the suggested addition of a representative of the Government Crisis Communications Network as a member. It should be focused on response and the aspect of preparedness for response, as well as the associated aspect of resilience that comes in this space. The membership should be considered as a whole; the true value of the SDCG is its collective

membership, working together to deliver the requirements of the QDMC, SDMG and the SDC. The SDCG should meet regularly throughout the year.

KPMG's Independent Review at p.133 stated, "*It is KPMG's view that a 'rotating' leadership model increases the risk of confusion and inconsistency to the application of the SDCG's responsibilities. This view was also shared a (sic) number of stakeholders through consultations, and is borne out of practical, real-life situations that are impacting the State presently*". The review concurs that the three-Chair arrangement be discontinued. Additionally, and in line with the suggestion in the Independent Review at p.133 "*KPMG suggests that the Chair of the State Disaster Coordination group is permanently transitioned [to] QPS*", this review recommends a single Chair arrangement under a senior QPS officer be established.

A policy aspect that had been previously introduced into the SDCG Terms of Reference mirrored the existing inter-departmental processes at a lower level for governance and policy. Therefore, it is recommended that the existing statewide inter-departmental policy process be the method for creating or amending disaster management policy, and the policy aspect of the SDCG be removed from the Terms of Reference.

Observation: It is suggested that the SDCC and the Watch Desk functions transfer to the QPS through the Machinery of Government arrangements, understanding that this is a matter for consideration of the Reform Implementation Taskforce (RIT).

The Terms of Reference for the SDCG should be reviewed and amended to reflect changes to the disaster management framework at the state level. This includes the establishment of the SRRG, which reflects the uplift to QRA and the assigned responsibilities of *Prevention, Preparedness, Recovery and Resilience*. The SRRG and the SDCG will complement each other and provide clear direction and responsibility, reflecting the challenges that the state is likely to face in the future.

Recommendation

2. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management structures:
 - a. That the State Disaster Coordination Group revert to a single Chair arrangement (chaired by a Senior Queensland Police Officer), focused on response and the aspect of preparedness for, and resilience in, response. The Terms of Reference should be amended to incorporate this and other changes to its role and functions.

State Recovery Coordinator and State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator

Currently, the appointment of a State Recovery Coordinator (SRC) is legislated under s 21D of the Act. The Chair of the QDMC will appoint and terminate this position in writing only. There has been occasion where Queensland has been impacted by more than one disaster event or impacts in geographically disparate areas. This has resulted in more than one SRC being appointed to coordinate disaster recovery operations simultaneously. The State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator (SRPPC), who is advising the QDMC/SDMG on the recovery, will need to harmonise information received from each SRC to provide an overall picture to government. It is recommended that whenever a SRC is appointed, clear lines of reporting to the SRPPC be established.

The Chief Executive Officer of QRA is the SRPPC as appointed by the Premier. The role of the SRPPC is to:

- *Engage collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure recovery activities provide the best outcomes for the people of Queensland, in terms of timeliness, quality of service and advice to government.*
- *Ensure better preparedness of government entities and the community for recovery operations.*
- *Lead recovery planning, policy and recovery capability development to ensure effective recovery operations and coordination.*
- *Oversee the effective delivery of relief and immediate recovery operations until a SRC is appointed.*
- *Facilitate the provision of local recovery planning and operations support, when requested by the impacted LDMGs/LRGs.*
- *Ensure continual improvements in disaster recovery policies, procedures and planning.*
- *Oversee state-level preparedness for recovery operations.*
- *Manage and resource a newly appointed SRC and be available for consultation with the SRC/Deputy SRCs throughout the duration of their appointment.*
- *Attend QDMC and State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG) meetings and liaise with the State Disaster Coordinator (SDC) in the lead up to a disaster (if possible), and during disaster response operations.*
- *Work with the SDC to ensure seamless transition from response operations to recovery operations.*
- *Work with stakeholders to collaboratively implement the delivery of resilience-building measures and ongoing resilience continuous improvement.*

- *Ensure a review of disaster recovery operations is conducted after an event.*

The position of the SRPPC is referenced within the SDMP, PRRR Guidelines and the Queensland Recovery Plan but is not stated in legislation, unlike the State Disaster Coordinator and State Recovery Coordinator roles; nor is it well recognised among stakeholders and the community.

For consistency, it is suggested that the Act be amended to include the position, role and functions of the SRPPC. Embedding this position in the Act places the role of the SRPPC on a similar standing to the SDC.

Recommendations

1. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management legislation:
 - d. That the *Disaster Management Act 2003* be amended to establish the position, role and functions of the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator.
2. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management structures:
 - b. That a State Recovery and Resilience Group be established and embedded in the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements alongside the State Disaster Coordination Group, to focus on disaster management functions outside of response. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority should lead the establishment of the State Recovery and Resilience Group, develop the Terms of Reference and chair the group.
 - d. That clear lines of reporting be established between any appointed State Recovery Coordinator, to the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator.

State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG)

The role of the SRRG is to operationalise strategic decisions made by the state group(s) reporting back on outcomes and any emerging strategic issues as they relate to *Resilience, Prevention, Preparedness, and Recovery*. It sits at level with the SDCG and is established alongside the SDCG to focus on the key aspects of disaster management functions outside of response. This partnership with the SDCG will position the state for the future, providing a coordinated end-to-end disaster management capability.

The proposed SRRG objectives are to:

- Provide collaborative input from member agencies to inform the development of recovery and resilience in Queensland.
- Provide guidance on preparedness, prevention and recovery capability needs and development opportunities.
- Manage and coordinate activities, emerging issues and solutions to cross-cutting issues across the Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups (FRRGs).
- Ensure preparedness, prevention, recovery and resilience activities are coordinated and implemented for the benefit of Queensland communities through the FRRGs.
- Ensure recovery and resilience activities are monitored and reported on to ensure objectives and outcomes are achieved.

Proposed Membership: FRRG leads, SDCG liaison, subject matter experts (including hazard leads), industry specialists where required, observers and others invited by the Chair.

The SRRG should meet regularly throughout the year.

Emergency Relief Subcommittee

The SDMP currently refers to *'Emergency Supply'* and *'Resupply'*, defining *'Emergency supply'* as *"... the acquisition and management of emergency supplies and services in support of displaced persons during disaster operations"* (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, 2018b). QFES is the single lead agency assigned to this responsibility.

'Resupply' is led by QFES, LDMGs and QPS. The SDMP defines it as *"When communities, properties or individuals are isolated for an extended period from their normal sources of food and basic commodities, support will be provided, dependent upon the respective circumstances. The entity isolated will determine the responsible agency / group. Therefore, multiple lead agencies are identified for this function"* (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, 2018b).

It is proposed that the term *'Emergency Supply'* be renamed as *'Emergency Relief'*. The Standard identifies seven (7) shared responsibilities; shared responsibility five (5) refers to *'operations'*. Outcome 10 of operations states that *"Relief operations minimise the negative impacts of an event on the community and provide the support needed for recovery"*. This references *'Relief'* as the interface between Response and Recovery and, as such, it relates to the immediacy of minimising impact and is emphasised through the word *'emergency'*. It is proposed the function be referred to as *'Emergency Relief'*, in line with Outcome 10 of the Standard.

To support the SDCG and the SRRG in the immediacy of Emergency Relief, it is recommended that a Subcommittee of the SDCG and SRRG be established to undertake the functions involved in Emergency Relief. It is further recommended that the QPS, QRA and DSDILGP meet to determine Chair and Deputy Arrangements. The subcommittee would report to both the SDCG and the SRRG and should reflect a strong partnership arrangement which would develop a strategy for the provision of Emergency Relief reflecting a strong integrated arrangement, across the spectrum of PPRR.

The core of this subcommittee could include Procurement, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, the LGAQ, Queensland Treasury, Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), Department of Communities, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, an NGO such as the Australian Red Cross, Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), Australian Defence Force (ADF) and NEMA.

The core would be supported by an outer core group of industry specialists drawn from NGOs, Industry and Government Owned Corporations (GOCs), representing fields such as retail, transport, logistics, animal food stock etc. The core would draw on the outer core expertise to deliver a systems-based response from Request for Assistance (RFA) through to delivery, all accomplished through professional partnerships.

The concept is to harness the immense knowledge and skill from a diverse range of government and private enterprise, delivering a systems-based approach from the Request for Assistance (RFA) for Emergency Relief through to delivery of product, all done through professional partnerships. The final composition of the inner and outer core membership should rest as a joint responsibility with the QPS and QRA, in consultation with the SDC and the SRPPC.

Recommendation

2. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management structures:
 - e. That an Emergency Relief Subcommittee of the State Disaster Coordination Group and the State Recovery and Resilience Group be established to reflect a strong partnership arrangement to address all aspects of Emergency Relief. The roles of Chair and Deputy Chair to be determined via consultation between the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.
 - f. That the final composition of the Emergency Relief subcommittee's inner and outer core membership be a joint responsibility of the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local

Government and Planning, in consultation with the State Disaster Coordinator and the State Recovery Policy and Planning Coordinator.

3. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's disaster management plans and guidelines:
 - b. That the term 'Emergency Supply' be changed to 'Emergency Relief' in the State Disaster Management Plan.
 - c. That the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning develop an Emergency Relief strategy.

Recommendation

2. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management structures:
 - c. That, to support the State Recovery and Resilience Group, the Functional Recovery Groups expand their remit to incorporate resilience and be renamed Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups.

Queensland Resilience Coordination Committee

In Queensland, the Queensland Resilience Coordination Committee (QRCC) is the main governance body that exists to oversee disaster resilience activities. It was established in 2017. The QRCC was created to provide a platform that enhances community resilience, mitigation, and prevention capability across all Queensland Government agencies for all hazards. Its primary responsibility is to:

- Provide strategic direction and advice on policies and capabilities for the enhancement of resilience in Queensland
- Identify opportunities for whole-of-government resilience policy development
- Identify future trends and issues to enhance disaster resilience to all hazards
- Oversee the implementation of the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience and associated actions
- Oversee the implementation of the Queensland Flood Risk Management Framework and associated actions.

The QRCC sits alongside the QDMA structure and legislation, rather than within it, and as a result it has been difficult to obtain buy-in from all agencies and to establish accountability to implement a

systems approach to resilience that connects agencies and sectors to deliver improved outcomes for Queensland.

This review offers a significant opportunity to apply the QDMA more effectively in the *Prevention, Preparedness and Recovery* phases of the PPRR cycle, elevating their importance and better embedding them in documentation within the QDMA. Establishing a State Recovery and Resilience Group (SRRG) which would operate as part of the QDMA will help to address this issue. This growth should include an expansion of the FRGs to become Functional Recovery and Resilience Groups, tasked to provide expert advice and practical support to the SRRG (see Figure 2).

Additionally, given the increasing discourse surrounding Resilience at the local, state, federal and international levels, and the Government's endorsed position on Resilience as outlined in the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience, it is recommended that the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements embed Resilience (encompassing Prevention, Preparedness and Recovery) into its objectives, guiding principles and definitions.

Queensland State Disaster Management Plan

Disaster management roles and responsibilities are reflected throughout documentation supporting the QDMA and the Standard. The SDMP is the primary document under the arrangements supported by a variety of other documents which include, the Queensland Prevention, Preparation, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline ([PPRR Guideline](#)), the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements Participant Guide ([the Participant Guide](#)), the [Queensland Recovery Plan](#), and [hazard and functional lead agency sub plans](#) (for example the Bushfire Plan).

Within these documents there are varying definitions of roles, responsibilities, functions, and practices that enable current and future disaster management in Queensland. This has created some confusion across stakeholder groups, as well as making it increasingly difficult to update and ensure accuracy across the documentation. To ensure effectiveness of disaster management by the State, the SDMP should be regularly reviewed and updated to recognise any machinery of government changes, take into account lessons learned from events, and reflect contemporary DM practices.

Any review of the SDMP or associated QDMA documents should include consultation with agencies and confirmation that any proposed changes are considered against related QDMA documents and policies. The current requirement under s 51 of the Act are for QDMC to review the SDMP as it considers appropriate. It is proposed that this function move to the new SDMG. The expectation is that the SDMP would be reviewed more regularly. The SDMP needs to be reviewed and updated to

incorporate all changes to the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and reflect the current machinery of government arrangements.

Recommendation

3. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's disaster management plans and guidelines:
 - a. That there should be one State Disaster Management Plan that succinctly describes all of the Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements, supported by separate sub-plans across the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery spectrum, including Resilience, mirroring the new governance structure. The State Disaster Management Plan should be reviewed biannually and/or following debriefs from significant disaster operations where relevant.

Cross border – enabling networks and relationships

A key element found in much of the documentation, plans and reviews on the disaster management system is the need to build and maintain relationships. The Standard encourages entities to proactively work together in a cooperative environment to achieve better results for the community and develop a collaborative culture within disaster management. The review team found that collaborative partnerships were evident across the QDMA. This was through informal relationships developed at the frontline, between local (DMOs and Resilience Officers) and district levels (XOs and DDCs); and formal arrangements such as Memoranda of Understanding between local government areas, and partnerships between state government agencies. Frontline staff play a critical role in establishing and fostering relationships, providing local context and knowledge.

The fundamental core of good partnerships is their ability to bring together diverse resources in ways that can together achieve more: more impact, greater sustainability, increased value to all.

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The review team found a number of partnerships, born from necessity through shared disaster events, have formalised across the Qld/New South Wales border. These relationships ensure that councils, and officers 'at level' are able to liaise with their counterparts and have meaningful dialogue to ensure there is situational awareness as to the events that are happening in neighbouring areas. It is noted that both the QPS and the New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) have recently created Disaster

Management roles, at the level of Deputy Commissioner. Regular engagement between these senior officers and their teams would be beneficial to disaster management in both states.

Recommendation

4. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to the ways that Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements support cross-border collaboration:
 - a. That documentation and plans that support the operationalisation of the Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements is updated to encourage and enable cross-border disaster management engagement and relationships at officer-level, council to council, and district to district.
 - b. That all Local and District Disaster Management Groups who share a border or borders with other states or Territories conduct collaborative disaster management planning and exercising.

Good practice

Collaboration between LGAs

Numerous examples of good practice collaboration between LGAs were provided to IGEM through the review process. These included the following:

- Council to Council (C2C) arrangements, which facilitates requests for assistance from impacted councils to be linked to offers of assistance from non-impacted councils, including both human and physical resources. C2C arrangements and requests for resources were activated during 2022 South East Queensland floods, whereby workers from councils in Mackay, Gladstone, Central Highlands, Rockhampton, Redlands, and the Gold Coast assisted South-East Queensland communities for several weeks. The C2C arrangements are facilitated through the LGAQ and an established function in section 7.7 of the Disaster Management Guideline.
- The establishment of several Regional Organisations of Councils and Council Alliances throughout Queensland, which connect local councils, and facilitates working relationships, joint advocacy of priorities in the region, and resource sharing. North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils illustrated joint advocacy when they asked for increased support for flood affected areas in North-West Queensland Region from State and Federal Government in March 2023.
- Local governments signing MOUs with councils which commit to bi-annual meetings, sharing of human resources when assistance is required, and sharing of information, such as plans,

preparedness activities, experiences, lessons, and other relevant documents. Anecdotally, the MOUs have facilitated a strong working relationship, with key personnel often liaising together.

Cross-border collaboration

Numerous examples of good practice cross-border collaboration were provided to IGEM through the review process. These included the following:

- Numerous examples of local government signing MOU arrangements with collaborators interstate – for example, Balonne Shire Council signing an MOU with Moree Plains Regional Council and their involvement in the border region council collaboration.
- Local government membership in the border regional organisation of councils, which connect local councils in Queensland and New South Wales, providing a forum to discuss matters affecting the region, advocate for best outcomes, and undertake projects which increase efficiencies.
- Local government being given membership on interstate committees – for example, the city of Gold Coast has membership on the Tweed Local Emergency Management Committee and the Tweed Shire Council has membership on the Gold Coast Local Disaster Management Group.
- Facilitation of cross border exercises and involvement in operational reviews that have cross border impacts.
- The Department of Energy and Public Works working with the NSW Government on supporting Lismore and surrounding areas in response to the flooding they endured in 2022.

Balonne Shire Council

The Balonne Shire Council have an established working relationship with their New South Wales cross-border colleagues, including hospitals, police, transport, and the Moree Regional Council. Key examples of how the States work together include:

- The Councils have an MoU, which commit to regular meetings, resource sharing, information sharing, including disaster management plans and other relevant plans, and undertaking collaborative and/or dual endorsed projects
- Virtual cross border disaster management meetings are held, with up to 60 practitioners in attendance.
- The Councils support each other with penstocks, design of levees, and cross-border vector control.

- Sharing of resources; for example, the Balonne Shire provided staff to Moree Plains Shire to assist with operating the water treatment plant during a staffing shortage; and as part of the MoU, Moree Plains Shire provide waste management, however during a flood, arrangements were made for Balonne Shire Council to do so;
- The ambulance and hospital at Mungindi work together, despite being on opposite sides of the border, however during floods, the officer in charge of the local Queensland Ambulance Service works with New South Wales counterparts to identify localities they can't access and assists with transport.

Resilience

Resilience in Queensland is governed by the *Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2022 – 2027* (QSDR) which was developed “*following extensive consultation with partner delivery agencies and identifies new strategic commitments that will embed disaster risk reduction and resilience into decision making, and address systemic disaster risk by coordinating across stakeholders and sectors*”. The QSDR is an important document in the QDMA and sets four key objectives which are underpinned by strategic commitments and actions, to improve Queensland’s resilience to disasters:

- Understand risk – applying data to strengthen risk reduction understanding, culture and education to help Queensland communities become more resilient to future disasters.
- Work together – increase the role of state-led coordination of resilience outcomes by enhancing cooperation and working across silos to implement whole-of-government activities.
- Seek new opportunities – leverage regional, local and community knowledge to enhance capability to drive best practice in building resilience.
- Continuous improvement –clearer, more direct connection of funding to risk-based need(ibid).

The lead state agency for coordinating the QSDR is the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, under guidance of the Queensland Resilience Coordination Committee (QRCC). The QRA receives input and advice from the partner agencies as outlined on page of the 2 of the QSDR.

Resilience in Queensland is a shared responsibility. The QSDR aims to embed the mandate for collaboration across stakeholders to ensure strategic commitments, actions and responsibilities are clearly outlined with agreed responsible lead agencies for delivery. The QSDR highlights the need for agencies with hazard responsibilities to maintain the current work they are doing in regard to

identifying resilient opportunities, in a partnership way, with other agencies and where applicable, non-government agencies.

As the frequency and intensity of disaster events in Queensland continues to increase, the past few years have highlighted the growing need for a cross-organisational body such as the QRCC to oversee the coordination of 'all hazards' resilience activities in Queensland.

Observation: As a consequence of the proposed changes in this review it is suggested that the QSDR be reviewed to ensure the document reflects the proposed changes to resilience.

Recommendation

5. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to the ways that 'resilience' is reflected in Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements:
 - a. That the *Disaster Management Act 2003* be amended to include a definition of 'resilience' that reflects the Queensland Government's endorsed definition within the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience, clarifying that Resilience functions incorporate activities related to the phases of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

QDMA for all Queenslanders

Disasters disproportionately impact individuals who already experience discrimination, disadvantage and inequality (Department of Communities, 2016). Socio-economic, cultural, demographic, geographic and other factors that prevent people from seeking disaster risk reduction information, or accessing disaster management services, need to be understood and addressed as part of effective and equitable disaster management.

Queensland is home to the [second-largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia](#) and government is focussed on achieving long-term social and economic outcomes for Queensland's First Nations peoples (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, 2020). This includes the need to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a greater voice on issues that impact them and their lives. This must include the meaningful involvement of First Nations peoples in disaster management prevention and planning as well as the protection of culturally significant sites, wherever possible, from the impact of disasters.

The SDMP could better reflect responsibilities to adopt person-centred planning and build on the work of the [Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Framework](#) and Toolkit. Submissions provided to IGEM, observations shared at the First Nations roundtable and partner engagement meetings,

highlighted a strong desire for active and respectful participation within the QDMA. This includes enabling First Nations voice at the state level of the QDMA. There is an opportunity to co-design and formalise currently informal networks that enable diverse voices to be heard. Where community representatives are part of local disaster management groups some do not feel involved, and their expertise is not valued. Meaningful inclusion needs to be holistic, long term and sustainable, be capable of representing the whole of the community's interests, and not be limited by local government or disaster district boundaries.

In Qld, government agencies and departments, the QPS and other emergency services and local government have obligations under the [Human Rights Act 2019](#) to make decisions and act compatibly with human rights and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions. All disaster and emergency management organisations should also avoid discrimination and address issues for people facing more than one type of disadvantage or discrimination. The [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#) makes discrimination in the provision of goods and services against the law. This applies to access to, and use of, any place or facilities that members of the public are permitted to use (such as places of refuge), transport services (such as for evacuation), and public and local government services (across all phases of disaster management). How a person is treated in the supply of services, and the way in which services are supplied, needs to be free from discrimination (Queensland Human Rights Commission, 2019).

Effective implementation of the QDMA's 'shared responsibility' principle requires equal attention to the principles of inclusion and equity. Entities need to know how best to create and maintain inclusive and culturally safe places, policies and practices that remove barriers to inclusion and empower marginalised people to act, sharing responsibility to reduce disaster risk and build resilience.

Inclusive disaster management practice also requires diverse communities to be seen as trusted partners with agency to design their own outcomes, rather than as problems to address. Trust must flow both ways, a goal that can be complicated by command-and-control environments (Duckworth, 2022).

There is capacity for the QDMA to better support state, district and local plans by linking to organisations charged with supporting inclusion in disaster risk reduction. Partnerships between organisations working to reduce disaster risk for vulnerable people need to be sustained and broadened across the sector, supporting the development of innovative, place-based approaches that apply an inclusive, community development lens to reducing systemic disaster risk (National Emergency Management Agency, 2022).

When strategies and practices to enable inclusive community engagement to reduce risk and build resilience are co-designed, measured and evaluated, they are also aligned to the Sendai Framework. This approach needs to be characterised by inclusion, equitable access to services, and adoption of personal and cultural safety principles. It can be achieved by engaging representatives of groups at greater risk, and marginalised communities, to co-design risk reduction and resilience strategies, their success measures and the evaluation of the impact of the strategies, embracing contemporary disaster management practices.

Independent Review of Disaster Funding and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements

The [Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements](#) (DRFA) have been in place since 1 November 2018, when they replaced the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. Aspects of the DRFA have been under review since 2020, with the [Federal Government announcing](#) in February 2023 that it has commissioned a comprehensive review of all disaster funding in Australia. This includes the DRFA and other disaster-related funding streams, such as the Disaster Ready Fund. The final report from that review is expected in April 2024.

With climate change already leading to more frequent and severe weather events across Australia, there is a growing need to prioritise investment in resilience. Nationally, we know that post-disaster investment in resilient infrastructure during the disaster reconstruction process is an efficient and effective way to reduce the impacts of future events, help communities recover and make them more resilient, and save costs for all levels of government; data from DRFA infrastructure betterment projects in Queensland demonstrates this.

As QRA is the lead agency in Queensland that manages and coordinates the state's program of recovery and reconstruction funding within disaster-impacted communities and delivers best-practice administration of public reconstruction and disaster resilience / risk reduction funds, it is recommended that any suggested changes to the DRFA be led by QRA.

There is also an opportunity to streamline the DRFA activation process to improve responsiveness for providing funding assistance to disaster-impacted communities. Currently, DRFA activation is formally approved by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, rather than the Minister responsible for the QRA. This is a carryover from when DRFA activation was managed by Emergency Management Queensland, prior to the creation of QRA.

Recommendation

6. The change to the way that Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements are supported through Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements:
 - a. That the Queensland Reconstruction Authority be Queensland's lead agency coordinating Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Ministerial responsibility for activation of DRFA should transfer from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, to the Minister responsible for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.

Public Safety and Preparedness campaigns

Within Queensland, there are a number of public safety and preparedness campaigns and communication strategies to help Queenslanders and Queensland communities prepare for disasters. These include:

- Queensland Get Ready Campaign – led by QRA.
- If It's Flooded, Forget It – led by QFES.
- Bushfire Awareness Campaign – led by QFES.

While some campaigns focus on proactive encouragement to empower community members to understand their risk, prepare household emergency plans and pack an emergency kit, other campaigns focus on consequences and nudge theory approaches to discourage certain behaviours.

The QRA, through their 'Get Ready Queensland' campaign prepare Queenslanders for disaster through targeted marketing, communications and community outreach activities.

Australia's ability to adapt to a changing climate and increased incidence of bushfires and other crises will continue to depend on universities and research institutes to expand Australia's diverse knowledge base, critical thinking and research capability, and to translate the research into continued improvements in preparation, response and recovery.

(Binskin, Bennett, & Macintosh, 2020)

There is an opportunity to incorporate statewide coordination across campaigns focused on disaster management to synchronise topic, message and delivery. Discussions should be held with all entities involved in disaster management messaging to improve coordination and consistency of messaging.

Recommendation

7. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following action linked to disaster management preparedness messaging:
 - a. That the Queensland Reconstruction Authority 'Get Ready Queensland' brand expands to include bushfire awareness campaigns and If It's Flooded Forget It.

Training and Professional Development

Training and professionalisation were strong themes throughout the submissions and engagement activities during this review. Disaster management training is one activity undertaken by key partners to develop individuals' disaster management capabilities and synergise organisational capability in disaster management. There are separate training needs for key disaster management partners. The need for disaster management training is identified in several disaster management doctrine.

The Act, the SDMP and The Standard recognise training as a key component of the 'people' accountability, and further identifies training as a key indicator of capability integration. As a result of the Machinery of Government (MOG) changes and in accordance with the KPMG review responsibility for training will transition to the QPS.

There are multiple pathways to build capability within the disaster management sector – foundational training developed through the QDMTF; professional development through accreditation, exercising and on the job experience; and academic qualifications through tertiary institutions. There is a distinction between training requirements required for the volunteer agencies, SES and MRQ, and training in disaster management; opportunities for improvement also differ between the professions.

NEMA has developed a Certificate 3 and Diploma-level Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications under the Public Safety Training Program, after seeking input from representatives from all levels of government, and across industry sectors. The qualifications are designed to provide a national approach to recovery competencies, and training pathways to support interoperability and sharing of human and physical resources across the country.

Universities play a key role in opportunities for professional development and training. The role of the research sector in disaster management remains vital and has been recognised as such through inclusion of Disaster Management Research as a discrete chapter within the SDMP. The growing complexity of disaster management also requires multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches to

problem solving, with research and learnings feeding into the development of policy, training, and program development.

Recommendation

8. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following actions linked to Disaster Management sector capability and accreditation:
 - a. That all training associated with the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework should, wherever possible, identify and utilise pathways to achieve nationally recognised qualifications.
 - b. That the Queensland Police Service undertake a capability assessment of the State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue Queensland, and the broader disaster management sector, for the present and future. This should include a review of the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework.

Lack of a common operating picture (Guardian / DIEMS and EMS)

The 2020 RCNDA emphasised the significance of a common operating picture, arguing that Australian, state and territory governments should (Binskin et al., 2020): *“prioritise the implementation of harmonised data governance and national data standards” (Recommendation 4.1)*, and, *“create common information platforms and share technologies to enable collaboration in the production, analysis, access, and exchange of information, data and knowledge about climate and disaster risks” (Recommendation 4.2)*.

The current information platforms used by entities involved in the QDMA vary. At the local level of the arrangements, many local governments use Guardian IMS, district groups use DIEMS, and at the state level EMS (Noggin) is used. Concerns about these operating platforms, their interoperability, and several related issues were expressed widely as part of the review.

The CSIRO Report on Climate and Disaster Resilience suggested that *“greater interoperability should be a guiding principle for more effective use of resources” (CSIRO, 2020)*. This suggests there are opportunities for advancing how the QDMA operates through a longer-term evaluation of the utility of existing IT systems for present and future events.

Data Sharing and Privacy

Communication and information sharing were key themes identified by IGEM as areas where opportunities for improvement were possible and necessary due to the criticality of these issues for the overall functioning of the system. Reliable data and clearly articulated information flows are essential in ensuring stakeholders and the community can prepare for and respond to disasters. Equally, establishing and developing partnerships prior to the emergency event with other stakeholders, is vital in ensuring disasters can be adequately prepared for and responded to.

It was apparent during the extensive engagement undertaken as part of this review that there are some misconceptions and difficulties being experienced by partners relating to the timely sharing of information. In an effort to identify real concerns from misconceptions, the IGEM undertook a roundtable with various partners, including the Privacy Commissioner from the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC). Participating agencies and non-government organisations presented scenarios based on real situations which were then work-shopped to provided solutions for the future.

Scenarios included the sharing of information during a bio-security event; a significant urban fire; between a government and non-government agency surrounding access to relief and funds; and the provision of data as part of the fulfillment of an agreement between government and a charity. It was identified that a better understanding of the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)* (the IP Act) could resolve many of the issues that were discussed. There are clear provisions in the IP Act that enables the collection, sharing and use of personal information in an emergency, including to lessen or prevent a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare.

Of particular relevance to the disaster management sector is Information Privacy Principle (IPP) 2(3) which outlines what entities must do in terms of advising the individual from whom the information is collected as to where that information may be shared.

IPP 10 and IPP 11 detail how personal information that is collected by an entity for one purpose may be used by and/or accessed by another entity for another purpose. The sharing of personal information between disaster management entities is permissible if the individual providing the information is aware, at the time of providing the information, that it is going to be shared with a particular agency for a particular purpose. It was also identified during the roundtable that some concerns surrounding the release of information to an entity were due to a restrictive policy environment rather than the legislative environment.

Agency policies that restrict the disclosure or sharing of information when exercising their disaster management functions should be reviewed to identify to staff how lawfully collected information may be shared. Agencies should also be aware of the services provided by the OIC which may be able to assist them resolve any difficulties they are experiencing. The OIC have prepared a [guideline on Privacy and managing disaster events](#), available on their website, to assist the sector.

Transition of Disaster Management Functions

Disaster Risk

The QSDR recognises that disaster risk reduction is crucial to a resilient Queensland. Four objectives underpin the QSDR (Queensland Reconstruction Authority, 2022):

- Objective 1 – We understand the potential disaster risks we face
- Objective 2 – We work together to better manage disaster risk
- Objective 3 – We seek new opportunities to reduce disaster risk
- Objective 4 – We continually improve how we prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

At present, QFES is responsible for the development and delivery of evidence-based disaster risk information for Queensland. QFES's stated intent is to achieve this through the integration of contemporary and internationally aligned risk methodologies, including activities associated with disaster risk management, disaster risk reduction, climate change, and sustainable development. Integral to this work is the design and delivery of the [QERMF](#) across all local governments and disaster districts.

However, the QERMF is not broadly embraced across Queensland, as it is seen as complex, expensive and resource intensive, particularly for many small and medium-sized councils.

With the transition of QFES to the Queensland Fire Department, there is an opportunity for the ownership of state disaster risk, including associated projects, to transition to QRA as it aligns to the QRA remit under the QRA Act across prevention/mitigation, preparedness, and resilience. The Act should also be amended to outline responsibilities for risk assessment, risk management and risk reduction.

Recommendation

2. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following changes to Queensland's Disaster Management structures:
 - g. That the Queensland Reconstruction Authority leads state-level hazard and risk functions, including the design and delivery of a risk assessment tool that is locally appropriate, cost-effective and fit for purpose.

Committees and agreements (National, State and Local)

Queensland has two membership positions on the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) which are currently attended by the Commissioner Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and the DPC. The Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services for Police and Emergency Services attends the National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting (NEMMM) with the Commissioner QFES providing a support role to the Minister. The alignment of international and national policy with the State's disaster management arrangements is achieved through these meetings.

It is recognised that there are many arrangements in place at both the local, regional and national levels often underpinned by MOU's and contractual agreements. To support transition arrangements many of these arrangements will need to be reviewed.

It is suggested that a clear understanding of all current state and national disaster management committees will be required to ensure the appropriate agency represents the position of the state. The roles and terms of reference of those committees that reflect state disaster management arrangements and policy be tabled at the Reform Implementation Taskforce for discussion and consideration of future representation are non-hazard specific.

Recommendation

9. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following actions to support a seamless transition of Disaster Management responsibilities from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to Queensland Police Service:
 - a. That the roles and Terms of Reference of all current state and national disaster management committees that are non-hazard specific, and that reflect state disaster management

arrangements and policy, be tabled at the Reform Implementation Taskforce for discussion and consideration of future representation

- b. That the Reform Implementation Taskforce seeks clarity on all Memoranda of Understanding and agreements that are currently in scope as a result of the proposed Machinery of Government changes.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

In executing its functions, the Office of the IGEM regularly reviews and assesses the effectiveness of disaster management and makes recommendations for continuous improvements through IGEM review reports. There are many theories on continuous improvement; the commonality between each is the need to reflect on performance to verify if the desired improvement has been achieved. Any proposed changes resulting from this review should be revisited in the future to confirm if the full intent of the recommendations was realised, or whether additional adjustments are required to fully realise the desired improvement.

When an IGEM review is accepted by government, key agencies collaborate to develop a Queensland Government response. The Queensland Government Action Plan (Action Plan) outlines the acceptance of the review's recommendations, in full or partially, and includes the activities agencies agree to undertake to address the recommendation.

The development of Action Plans in isolation from the IGEM has resulted in some activities being unrelated, or not meeting the intent of a recommendation that has been agreed to, either in full or in part. It is also noted that the structure of Action Plans vary, with differing numbering systems, timeframes excluded or differing government response definitions (accepted, accepted in principle, supported, endorsed).

Together, these issues complicate the monitoring and evaluation of recommendations, making measurement and evaluation challenging and affecting the rigour and evidence-based approach of the IGEM Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) program.

Involving IGEM prior to the action plan being accepted, to provide observations of alignment between the recommendation's intent and what is being proposed in the action plan, will lead to improved outcomes.

Recommendations

9. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following actions to support a seamless transition of Disaster Management responsibilities from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to Queensland Police Service:
 - c. That any open Queensland Fire and Emergency Services recommendations made by the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, that are not hazard specific, transition to the Queensland Police Service at a time to be identified by the Reform Implementation Taskforce. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services should continue to progress implementation of recommendations, in consultation with the Queensland Police Service, until Machinery of Government changes are implemented.
 - d. That the Reform Implementation Taskforce determines the most appropriate agency to manage the ongoing whole-of-government coordination of implementation and reporting on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. Until this time Queensland Fire and Emergency Services should continue to progress implementation of recommendations in consultation with the Reform Implementation Taskforce.

10. The Inspector-General of Emergency Management recommends the following actions linked to the effective implementation and evaluation of the changes to Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements accepted from this Review:
 - a. That, in the 2027/28 financial year, the Inspector-General of Emergency Management partner with the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Reconstruction Authority to review the implementation of the Machinery of Government changes, and revised Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements.
 - b. That, for the recommendations arising from this review, the Inspector-General of Emergency Management is involved in consultation prior to the finalisation of the government action plan to align intended actions with the intent of the recommendations.
 - c. That this Review report be returned to the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management to monitor, evaluate and report on progress and implementation of the recommendations that are accepted in whole or in part by government.

Conclusion

As part of this Review, the IGEM has engaged with local government, disaster districts, agencies and non-government organisations across Queensland that has included visitations to remote, rural and isolated communities to gain a deeper understanding of how the QDMA works for them at the various tiers within the State.

The Review has identified opportunities for change to Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements, that provide opportunities for agile and adaptable frameworks that draw together all aspects of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery and Resilience that will assist in preparing the State for the future.

The Review has identified that the model of locally-led, regionally-coordinated, state-facilitated, with Commonwealth support to disaster management remains the most suitable and resilient model for Queenslanders.

Appendix A – Terms of Reference: Review of Queensland’s Disaster Management Arrangements

Context

On 26 October 2022, the Queensland Government announced its “Good Jobs and Better Fire and Emergency Services to Support Queensland’s Great Lifestyle” response to the Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (the Government Response).

Queensland has strong and effective disaster management arrangements; however, the Independent Review noted the need to continue to ensure the State’s arrangements are fit for purpose in the context of emerging climate impacts.

The Independent Review found that Queensland’s disaster management functions are better aligned with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and should be transferred to the stewardship of the QPS. The Government has accepted this recommendation in principle. The Government has also approved the expansion of the responsibilities of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to support further disaster preparedness programs and initiatives and better align with resilience agencies nationally.

Consistent with the recommendations of the Independent Review, the Government has requested the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM) conduct a review of Queensland’s disaster management arrangements to inform any changes to the arrangements, legislative reforms, or any updates to the State Disaster Management Plan. This review will also inform the transition of disaster management functions to the QPS and other relevant agencies.

Authorising Environment

S. 16C of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Act) outlines the following functions for the Office of the IGEM, including:

- to regularly review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management by the State, including the State disaster management plan and its implementation.
- to regularly review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management by district groups and local groups, including district and local disaster management plans.
- to regularly review and assess cooperation between entities responsible for disaster management in the State, including whether the disaster management systems and procedures employed by those entities are compatible and consistent.
- to make disaster management standards.
- to regularly review and assess disaster management standards.
- to review, assess and report on performance by entities responsible for disaster management in the State against the disaster management standards.
- to work with entities performing emergency services, departments, and the community to identify and improve disaster management capabilities, including volunteer capabilities.
- to monitor compliance by departments with their disaster management responsibilities
- to identify opportunities for cooperative partnerships to improve disaster management outcomes:
- to report to, and advise, the Minister about issues relating to the functions above

- to make all necessary inquiries to fulfil the functions above.

Purpose

In accordance with these functions, the review will broadly examine the structures and governance relevant to Queensland's disaster management arrangements including:

- the roles and responsibilities of parties to the arrangements.
- the role and effectiveness of disaster management committees reflected, and not reflected, in the Act including the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, State Disaster Management Group, District Disaster Management Committees, Local Disaster Management Committees and recovery focused committees.
- any matters to inform the appropriate allocation of State level disaster management functions across agencies in the context of outcomes from the Independent Review of QFES (noting the transition of the State Emergency Service and volunteer marine rescue functions to the QPS).
- Any matters to inform update of the Act and State Disaster Management Plan to support implementation of the structural elements of the Government Response, and clarification of roles and responsibilities of committees and parties to the arrangements.

In conducting the Review, the IGEM should ensure examples of good practice and any opportunities for improvement are highlighted in the report along with relevant observations, insights, findings, and recommendations. In addition, the IGEM is requested to consult with appropriate specialists to support the review.

Approach

The Office will work closely with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, QPS, QFES, QRA, DSDILGP, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, relevant state agencies involved in disaster management, the State Disaster Coordinator (SDC), the Lo, and other relevant stakeholders to obtain information necessary to the Review.

The Review should invite submissions from all relevant state agencies, local governments, and in-scope committees. The Review should consider recommendations arising from previous IGEM reviews and any relevant findings and recommendations from the RCNDA. In conducting the Review, consideration must be given to any impost on front line staff currently operationally deployed.

Reporting

The Review report should be based on the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland. The report is to be provided by four months from commencement to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services.

In providing its report, the IGEM may consider whether to provide an interim report into any of the individual matters outlined in these Terms of Reference. Any interim report is to be provided to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services at any appropriate time during the period of the Review. Before finalising its reports, the IGEM should consult with relevant entities on the draft report, including observations, insights, findings, and recommendations.

Appendix B – References

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