

8. Emergency Management

Local Governments in Western Australia play a significant role in emergency management. Both Commonwealth and State Government policy identify Local Government as a key player in community disaster resilience, preparedness and response. Local Governments however face a number of challenges in addressing their emergency management responsibilities, and these challenges differ greatly across the State.

8.1 Emergency Management Principles

Position Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The State Government bears fundamental responsibility for emergency management and has the role of providing strategic guidance, support and services for emergency management activities in Western Australia.2. The State Government should provide financial and resourcing support as necessary to enable Local Governments to adequately deliver their extensive emergency management roles and responsibilities under the State Emergency Management Framework.3. The Local Government Sector should be engaged as a partner in policy and legislative reviews that impact Local Government emergency management roles and responsibilities.
Background	In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.
State Council Resolution	December 2024 - 097.5/2024 December 2024 - 099.5/2024 November 2024 – 246.FM/2024 April 2024 – 238.FM/2024 December 2023 – 508.5/2023 August 2023 – 231.FM/2023 July 2022 – 354.5/2022
Supporting Documents	Submission on the State Hazard Plan – Human Biosecurity Submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan

8.2 State Emergency Management Framework

Position Statement	<p>Local Governments are supported to undertake their emergency management responsibilities by a simple and streamlined State Emergency Management Framework with the primary objectives of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Protecting people, the economy, and the natural environment from disasters;2. Supporting communities in preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies;3. Clearly outlining roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for Local Government and other emergency management stakeholders;4. Scalability and adaptability that supports Local Governments of varied capacity and capability; and5. Supporting agency interoperability through common systems and approaches to key activities including data management, communications, and hazard management.
Background	<p>In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.</p>
State Council Resolution	<p>December 2024 - 097.5/2024 December 2024 - 099.5/2024 November 2024 – 246.FM/2024 April 2024 – 238.FM/2024 December 2023 – 508.5/2023 July 2022 – 354.5/2022</p>
Supporting Documents	<p>Submission on the State Hazard Plan – Human Biosecurity Submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan</p>

8.3 Sustainable Grant Funding Model for Emergency Management

Position Statement	<p>Local Government should be empowered to discharge its emergency management responsibilities through sustainable grant funding models that support a shared responsibility and all hazards approach to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from natural disasters. A sustainable grant funding model for Local Government emergency management:</p>
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1. empowers Local Governments to undertake proactive approaches to preparedness, prevention, response and recovery;
2. supports the resilience of local communities through capacity-building activities and programs;
3. is responsive to the variations in Local Government resourcing and context;
4. develops the skills, capacity and capability of the emergency management workforce; and
5. is consistent, flexible, timely, accessible, scalable, strategic and the guidance provided is comprehensive.

Background	In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.
State Council Resolution	December 2024 - 099.5/2024 November 2024 – 246.FM/2024 August 2023 – 231.FM/2023 July 2022 – 354.5/2022
Supporting Documents	Submission on the State Hazard Plan – Human Biosecurity

8.4 Consolidated Emergency Services Act

Position Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Association advocates for the development of a Consolidated Emergency Services Act to provide a comprehensive and contemporary legislative framework to support the effective delivery of emergency services in Western Australia. The Legislation should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all emergency management stakeholders including Local Government. 2. The Local Government sector seeks ongoing engagement in the scoping and co-design of the Act and associated Regulations and supporting materials such as Guidelines and fact sheets. 3. The Association advocates for DFES to undertake a full costing analysis of the new Act and to provide to Local Government details of the cost implications prior to the release of any Exposure Draft Bill. 4. Any new or increased responsibilities placed on Local Government by the Consolidated Emergency Services Act must be accompanied by funding and resource support to enable Local Governments to adequately discharge those responsibilities.
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5. The Association recognises that in addition to the Consolidated Emergency Services Act, the Regulations and other supporting materials that are developed to support it provide a key resource for Local Governments in understanding and discharging their legislative obligations.

Background	In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.
State Council Resolution	December 2024 - 097.5/2024 July 2022 – 354.5/2022

8.5 Resource Sharing

Position Statement	Local Governments and the Association support resource sharing across the Local Government Sector for the purpose of emergency management, to support Local Governments to undertake effective and timely response and recovery to emergencies as well as conduct business as usual. The Association will endeavour to facilitate support to the sector in undertaking resource sharing arrangements.
Background	In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.
State Council Resolution	July 2022 – 354.5/2022

8.6 Lessons Learnt Management

Position Statement	The Association advocates for the implementation of a transparent and contemporary assurance framework for emergency management lessons management overseen by the State Emergency Management Committee. Findings from inquiries and reviews, and progress on implementation of recommendations, should be publicly reported regularly and consistently.
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Background	In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.
State Council Resolution	December 2024 - 099.5/2024 July 2022 – 354.5/2022

8.7 Emergency Services Levy

Position Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Government request the implementation of the recommendations from the 2017 Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) Review of the Emergency Services Levy, which supported increased transparency and accountability in the administration and distribution of the ESL through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Expansion of the ESL to fund Local Government emergency management activities across prevention, preparedness and response; b) Administration of the ESL by an independent organisation that is funded through consolidated revenue, with regular independent reviews of expenditure and assessment of the effectiveness of ESL funding expenditure to support prevention, preparedness and response activities; c) The ESL administration fee should recompense Local Governments for the complete cost of administering the ESL; d) Public disclosure of the allocation and expenditure of the ESL; e) Public disclosure by the State Government on the progress of implementation of each of the ERA Review recommendations; and f) A review of the role, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the Community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Program. 2. Local Government advocates that the ESL should be collected by the State Government, but failing that, the administration fee should recompense Local Governments for the complete cost of administering the ESL.
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Background	In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews
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and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.

State Council Resolution December 2024 - 097.5/2024
July 2022 – 354.5/2022

8.8 Local Government Grants Scheme

Position Statement

Local Government supports:

1. A full, independent review of the LGGS to investigate and analyse how ESL funds are allocated to Local Government via the LGGS;
2. A redesign of the LGGS to remove the ineligible and eligible list and create a sustainable, modern, equitable grants program that funds Local Government emergency management activities across prevention, preparedness and response;
3. An audit of existing buildings, facilities, appliances, vehicles, and major items of equipment for both Local Government Volunteer Bushfire Brigades (BFB) and State Emergency Services (SES) to inform the preparation of a Comprehensive Asset Management Plan and to guide future funding requests; and
4. in the interim, an immediate increase in the quantum of State Government funding to enable the provision of funding of operating and capital grant applications in full, to provide all resources necessary for the safe and efficient operation of Local Government Bushfire Brigades, in accordance with obligations of the Work Health and Safety 2020 legislation.

Background

In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.

State Council Resolution December 2024 - 097.5/2024
July 2022 – 354.5/2022

8.9 Expansion of the Community Emergency Services Manager Program

Position Statement	<p>That the Association advocates for an expansion of the Community Emergency Service Manager (CESM) Program, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All Local Governments should have the option of participating in the CESM Program.2. The full cost of the CESM Program should be funded through the Emergency Services Levy.
Background	<p>In 2022, WALGA conducted a review of its emergency management positions and prepared a suite of comprehensive policy positions on key issues and matters for the sector based on previous State Council endorsed submissions, recommendations from significant reviews and inquiries, and information and priorities captured in sector-wide consultations.</p>
State Council Resolution	<p>December 2024 - 097.5/2024 July 2022 – 355.5/2022</p>
Supporting Documents	<p>DFES Community Emergency Service Managers Reference Manual, May 2021</p>

8.10 Management of Bush Fire Brigades

Position Statement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bush Fire Brigade volunteers play a critical role in helping to protect their local communities. Local knowledge and skills are integral to bushfire management in Western Australia.2. Future management and funding of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades must:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Recognise the changing risk environment, including work health and safety requirements, and the increasing intensity and frequency of bushfires;b) Take account of the differing circumstances of Bush Fire Brigade units and regional variations in bush firefighting approaches; andc) Be adequately and equitably resourced through the Emergency Services Levy.3. The State Government, through the Consolidated Emergency Services Act and/or other mechanism's must:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Establish a clear framework to enable transfer of Bush Fire Brigades to the State Government if a Local Government decides to do;b) Consult on the process, timeline, and implications for transfer of responsibility for Bush Fire Brigades in accordance with 3(a) through the establishment
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- of a working group comprising representatives of Local Government, Bush Fire Brigades, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES);
 - c) Provide for mandatory and minimum training requirements and recognition of competency and prior learning for Bush Fire Brigade volunteers, supported by locally delivered fit-for-purpose and universally accessible training program, designed in consultation with Bush Fire Brigade representatives, Local Government and LGIS, and managed by DFES; and
 - d) Develop a co-designed suite of relevant management guidelines and materials to assist in the management of Bush Fire Brigades.
4. As a matter of priority within the emergency services Acts review, the State Government to consider the most appropriate operational model for management of Bush Fire Brigades, which may include the establishment of an independent Rural Fire Service, as recommended in the 2016 Ferguson Report.

Background

Under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, Local Governments have responsibility for the establishment and management of volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFBs). It was considered timely for the sector to consider its position on the most appropriate future management arrangements for BFBs as:

- the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act), enacted in March 2022, raised the sector's concerns regarding risk and liability in the management of BFBs; and
- the State Government is preparing the Consolidated Emergency Services Act, which is expected to be released for consultation in early 2023.

WALGA consulted the sector on this issue from 24 May to 29 July 2022 through a paper, *Arrangements for management of Bush Fire Brigades: Proposed Advocacy Position*. A total of 89 submissions were received from Local Governments, representing 64% of the Local Government sector and 77% of Local Governments that manage BFBs. Based on the feedback received, an Advocacy Position on Management of BFBs was adopted by State Council.

State Council Resolution

December 2024 - 097.5/2024
September 2022 – 377.7/2022

8.11 Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA)

Position Statement

1. The State Government should fund the implementation of the Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) Improvement Plan endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).
2. A reformed LEMA system should:
 - a) Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of Local Governments in emergency management;
 - b) Simplify the reporting processes and reduce the administrative burden of maintaining compliance;
 - c) Provide a suite of scalable tools and guidance materials that are accessible through an online knowledge hub;
 - d) Build the emergency management capacity and capability of Local Governments through the provision of targeted training, exercising support, human resources and sustainable funding;
 - e) Assist Local Governments to continue to deliver their core business activities and provide public information during an emergency event;
 - f) Improve the connectivity of Local Governments' various risk management and hazard planning processes through an integrated approach; and
 - g) Enable resource sharing and collaboration across the Local Government sector.

Background

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, all Local Governments are required to have Local Emergency Management Arrangement (LEMAs). LEMA refers to the collection of all the emergency management documentation, processes and agreements which apply to each Local Government district.

In 2021, WALGA was allocated \$140,040 in All West Australians Reducing Emergencies (AWARE) grant program funding to lead a consultation with Local Government for a LEMA Review.

WALGA's LEMA Review consultation with 100 Local Governments in 2022, confirmed that LEMA system reforms are required to empower Local Governments to prepare for and recover from hazards that are likely to impact their communities and business operations.

In early 2023, DFES developed a LEMA Improvement Plan that was informed by WALGA's LEMA Review consultation outcomes and recommendations.

The final LEMA Improvement Plan was endorsed by State Emergency Management Committee on 2 August 2023, noting that funding for implementation for the key actions is not yet confirmed.

Failing to reform the LEMA system will result in Western Australian communities being unprepared for the accelerating risks they face as a result of climate change.

It is imperative that Local Governments have access to ongoing financial and human resources to enable them to fulfil their emergency management obligations and enhance their community's disaster resilience.

State Council Resolution	December 2024 - 099.5/2024 November 2024 – 246.FM/2024 April 2024 – 238.FM/2024 September 2023 – 484.4/2023
Supporting Documents	Submission on the State Hazard Plan – Human Biosecurity WALGA LEMA Review consultation with Local Government State Emergency Management Committee LEMA Improvement Plan Submission on the Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan