

WALGA LEMA Improvement Report: Recommendations to inform the processes, structure and content of a new LEMA model

February 2025

WALGA acknowledges the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community. We embrace the vast Aboriginal cultural diversity throughout Western Australia, including Boorloo (Perth), on the land of the Whadjuk Nyoongar People, where WALGA is located and we acknowledge and pay respect to Elders past and present.

Summary of Recommendations

Codesigned by WALGA's LEMA Working Group, this report presents the following Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) improvement recommendations to the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) and Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) to inform the processes, structure and content of a new LEMA model.

Recommendation 1: Consistent Definition of LEMA: Include a consistent definition of LEMA throughout the State Emergency Management (EM) Framework that emphasises LEMA as the suite of EM-related documents and arrangements across PPRR, rather than a single overarching/master plan.

Recommendation 2: Differentiate LEMA Master Plans/Templates: Rename the titles of Local Governments' LEMA master plans/templates to differentiate the LEMA suite of arrangements from the LEMA documents.

Recommendation 3: Baseline Requirements in LEMA Guidance: Ensure new LEMA guidance information clearly stipulates Local Governments' baseline requirements.

Recommendation 4: LEMA Compliance Checks: Circumscribe Local Governments' LEMA compliance requirements to plans they are responsible for developing and maintaining. Exclude Local Government responsibility for maintaining/including hazard agency-specific plans, private sector plans, and school and hospital emergency plans applicable to the local district.

Recommendation 5: LEMA Infographic/Maturity Scale: Design a LEMA infographic/maturity scale that clearly outlines minimum LEMA requirements, essential operational information, and optional Local Government sub-plans/arrangements.

Recommendation 6: Clarify Evacuation Planning Roles and Documentation: Enhance Local Government's understanding of the Department of Communities' role and responsibilities in Emergency Relief and Support, including evacuation centre procedures. Identify how this role aligns with the documentation in the Local Emergency Management Arrangements.

Recommendation 7: Define Major and Minor LEMA Reviews: Clearly define 'Major LEMA Review' and 'Minor LEMA Amendments', specify when each is required, and ensure consistent use of these terms throughout the State EM Framework documents.

Recommendation 8: Procedures for LEMA Reviews: Include step-by-step procedural guidance on how to conduct a Major LEMA Review and Minor LEMA amendments.

Recommendation 9: Infographics for LEMA Review Actions: Design a new infographic to show clearer sequencing/pathways of Major LEMA Review and Minor LEMA Amendments actions.

Recommendation 10: Advance notice for LEMA Review Actions: Provide formal 'nearing Major review' correspondence to Local Government CEOs and Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) Chairs, informing them 12 months in advance of their 5-year Major LEMA Review obligations.

Recommendation 11: Advice During Drafting Process: Remove the requirement for the District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC) to provide advice during the drafting process.

Recommendation 12: Compliance/Audit Checklist: Develop a clear compliance/audit checklist that can be used by both Local Government staff and DEMAs when undertaking a Major LEMA Review.

Recommendation 13: Roles of DEMC and DEMA: More clearly delineate the roles of the DEMC and the role of the District Emergency Management Advisor (DEMA) within the State EM Framework, ensuring these terms are not used interchangeably.

Recommendation 14: Calculation of Major LEMA Review Dates: Consistently calculate the next Major LEMA Review dates from Council endorsement date rather than from SEMC Noting.

Recommendation 15: Empowering Non-Completion Notification Process: Revise the non-completion process to be more empowering and incentive-focused (e.g., link to funding).

Recommendation 16: Role of other State Agencies in supporting compliance: Remove the notification to the Department of Communities as the final non-adherence action.

Recommendation 17: Provide Local Government with clear guidance and resources to support their current Emergency Risk Management responsibilities. Consider supporting information from existing local risk profiles provided by DFES to support a review of the Local Government LEMA.

Recommendation 18: Scale up ERM: Consider the scaling up the development and maintenance of ERM plans to the district and state levels, with input from Local Government.

Recommendation 19: Integrative risk processes: Collaborate with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) to improve the connectivity of Local Governments' risk management, business continuity and strategic community planning.

Recommendation 20: LEMA Model Structure: Pilot a new Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) structure that distinctly separates: 1.) Guidance Information 2) A Local Government Council Policy/Plan 3) A Local Government Incident Support Plan 4) Local Government EM Sub-Plans.

Recommendation 21: Integrate Co-Design Feedback: Integrate WA Local Governments' codesign feedback into the development of a new LEMA guidance framework and online knowledge hub, which addresses LEMA improvement priorities

Recommendation 22: Develop Model Policy/Plan Templates: Approve WALGA to develop three DRAFT Council model policy/plan template examples tailored for Local Governments of varying sizes and capabilities, to be piloted with the broader Local Government sector as part of the LEMA Improvement Program.

Recommendation 23: Draft Incident Support Plan Template: Approve WALGA to develop a draft Incident Support Plan template to be piloted with the broader Local Government sector as part of the LEMA Improvement Program.

Recommendation 24: Comprehensive List of LEMA Sub-Plans: Develop a more comprehensive list of LEMA sub-plans, and make examples and resources easily accessible to help Local Governments develop these.

Recommendation 25: Integrated emergency management responsibilities: Strengthen the integration of Local Government Bushfire related arrangements into the new LEMA model.

1. Introduction

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is an independent, member-based, not-for-profit organisation representing and supporting the Western Australian (WA) Local Government sector. Our membership includes all 139 Local Governments in the State. We advocate to all levels of Government on behalf of our members and provide expert advice, services and support to Local Governments. WALGA's vision is for agile and inclusive Local Governments enhancing community wellbeing and enabling economic prosperity.

WA Local Governments are incredibly diverse, ranging in size from less than 1.1 to over 372,000 square kilometres and in population from 89 to over 224,000 people. The number of staff varies from fewer than 13 to over 1,200. This diversity extends to demographics, industries and climate and, hence, the exposure and vulnerability to various emergency events, both natural and human induced.

Local Governments have a significant role in emergency management (EM). Under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, Local Governments must prepare and maintain Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA), administer Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs), and manage community recovery. Many Local Governments also manage volunteer bushfire brigades and have various responsibilities under the *Bushfires Act 1954*. Local Governments face a number of challenges in addressing their emergency management responsibilities, and these challenges differ greatly across the State.

WALGA is committed to working closely with all levels of government to ensure that WA Local Governments understand and are supported in undertaking their emergency management responsibilities. The State Government has the role of providing strategic guidance, support, and services for emergency management activities in WA. It should also provide financial and resourcing support as necessary to enable Local Governments to adequately deliver their extensive emergency management roles under the State Emergency Management (EM) Framework. The LEMA Improvement Program provides an important opportunity to progress this objective by co-designing and implementing an improved LEMA system that:

- clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of Local Governments in emergency management;
- simplifies the reporting processes and reduce the administrative burden of maintaining compliance;
- provides a suite of scalable tools and guidance materials that are accessible through an online knowledge hub;
- builds the emergency management capacity and capability of Local Governments through the provision of targeted training, exercising support, human resources and sustainable funding;
- assists Local Governments to continue to deliver their core business activities and provide public information during an emergency event;
- improves the connectivity of Local Governments' various risk management and hazard planning processes through an integrated approach; and
- enables resource sharing and collaboration across the Local Government sector.

If coupled with an enhanced Local Government Emergency Planning Resourcing Program¹, the LEMA Improvement Program reforms will enable WA Local Governments to be better prepared for the emergencies likely to impact their communities and business operations.

Building on the LEMA Review consultation with Local Governments (Appendix 1), this report has been developed through a codesign process with WALGA's LEMA Improvement Project Working Group (LEMA WG). It also draws on a review of the State EM Framework and discussions with DEMAs and various DFES Directorates with a stake in LEMA. The report aims to advance LEMA Improvement outcomes by offering recommendations on LEMA processes, structure, and content to guide DFES policy and guideline work, WALGA template and supporting resources work, and updates to the State EM Framework.

2. Background

Recognising the need for a more contemporary and fit-for-purpose local emergency management system, in 2019, the SEMC approved a review of the current LEMA model to identify the key issues and opportunities for improvement. In 2021, WALGA was allocated AWARE Funding to lead a Local Government consultation for the LEMA Review to ensure a sector-led approach.

From April to December 2022, WALGA consulted with 100 Western Australian Local Governments to inform the LEMA Review. The consultation findings laid the groundwork for a comprehensive LEMA Improvement Plan endorsed by the SEMC in August 2023 (see Appendix 1 for WALGA's LEMA Review outputs). In December 2023, the SEMC approved a LEMA Improvement Program Management Plan and allocated funding from the State Level Project Fund to deliver Phase 1 of the LEMA Improvement deliverables over an 18-month period.

Phase 1 commenced in March 2024 and is being delivered as a partnership project between WALGA and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) on behalf of the SEMC.

WALGA's LEMA Improvement Project forms an integral part of the LEMA Improvement Program Management Plan (PMP).

WALGA has agreed to:

- be the key contact point for Local Governments;
- consider LEMC and DEMC Review outcomes;
- consult with the Local Government sector on DFES Local EM Policy work/changes to the State EM Framework;
- convene a Local Government LEMA Improvement Working Group to codesign new LEMA resources, model templates and guidance material; and
- coordinate a LEMA pilot program with a representative range of Local Governments.

3. Approach

The WALGA LEMA Improvement Project employs co-design methods and Agile principles, prioritising end-user needs and generating outputs through iterative feedback, collaboration, and experimentation.

¹ WALGA advocates that AWARE should be replaced with more robust, sustainable program that allocates \$ 9 Million annually and broadens the scope of activities, raises the funding caps and reduces the co-contribution and administrative requirements.

In April 2024, WALGA established a Local Government LEMA Working Group (LEMA WG) of diverse Local Government EM representatives (Appendix 2) to ensure that LEMA Improvement Program outputs meet the various needs and unique risk profiles of WA Local Governments.

WALGA has obtained feedback on:

- LEMA Improvement Program Issues and Considerations (Appendix 3);
- Local Governments' Phase 1 LG LEMA priority deliverables (Appendix 4);
- LEMA review, approval and non-completion notification processes;
- the current [LEMA Guideline and Model](#) structure, model and content and
- a proposed LEMA model that separates LEMA into guidance information, a Local Government EM Council document, a Local Government Incident Support Plan/Operational Plan and optional sub-plans (Appendix 4-5),

using a range of methods including:

- A MoSCoW prioritisation exercise;
- focus group discussions;
- one on one meetings;
- an online survey/collaborative platform; and
- desktop research/analysis of State EM Framework documents.

Analysis of the LEMA WG feedback, discussions with DEMA and various DFES staff, and a review of the current LEMA guidelines and State EM Framework documents have been instrumental in shaping the recommendations presented in this report.

4. Findings and recommendations

4.1. LEMA definitions and inclusions

Key Findings:

- **Inconsistent Definitions:** The definition and inclusions of what constitutes a Local Government LEMA are not clearly or consistently defined across the various State EM Framework documents, leading to different interpretations.
- **Dual Usage of LEMA:** The term LEMA is used to describe both "the collection of all emergency management documentation, systems, processes, agreements, and memorandums of understanding affecting the local government district" and "the overarching document and associated sub-plans."
- **Modular Design Issues:** The Current LEMA Guideline presents LEMA as a "modular design" with "take away" sections but does not clearly or accurately outline Local Governments' baseline obligations.
- **Compliance Confusion:** There are inconsistencies from both Local Governments and DEMAs regarding which LEMA components are required for legislative compliance versus optional inclusions.
- **Misalignment in Figure 1:** In Figure 1 (p.6) of the current LEMA Guideline and Model, the "required" LEMA components do not align with:
 - The legislative requirements outlined in the *Emergency Management Act 2005*,
 - The current DEMA compliance checklists,
 - The State EM Procedures.
- **Valuable but Non-Mandatory Components:** While the inclusion of an EM Contact Register, Resource Register, Critical Infrastructure, and Communication Plan are

considered critical Local Government LEMA information, they are not mandated by the *Emergency Management Act 2005* or delegated through the State EM Policies or Procedures.

- **Lack of Definition in Policy:** The State EM Policy does not include a clear definition of LEMA.
- **Responsibility for Sub-Plans:** Although the current guidelines state that LEMA includes the overarching document and associated sub-plans, Local Governments are not responsible for all the currently required LEMA documents and sub-plans, such as the Emergency Support and Relief Plan and HMA response plans. The State should maintain responsibility for emergency management plans developed by State agencies.
- **Incomplete Figure 1:** The current Figure 1 in the LEMA Guideline does not include a comprehensive list or contemporary examples of optional LEMA sub-plans, nor capture the breadth of sub-plans Local Governments have highlighted as priorities action (Appendix 6).
- **Emergency Risk Management uncertainty:** There is a lack of clarity around the requirements for Local Governments' emergency risk management following the conclusion of the State Risk Project, necessitating further guidance.
- **Evacuation Planning confusion:** There is a lack of clarity around evacuation planning and the delineation of roles and responsibilities between Local Governments and the Department of Communities.

Recommendation 1: Consistent Definition of LEMA: Include a consistent definition of LEMA throughout the State EM Framework that emphasises LEMA as the suite of EM-related documents and arrangements across PPRR, rather than a single overarching/master plan.

Recommendation 2: Differentiate LEMA Master Plans/Templates: Rename the titles of Local Governments' LEMA master plans/templates to differentiate the LEMA suite of arrangements from the LEMA documents.

Recommendation 3: Baseline Requirements in LEMA Guidance: Ensure new LEMA guidance information clearly stipulates Local Governments' baseline requirements.

Recommendation 4: LEMA Compliance Checks: Circumscribe Local Governments' LEMA compliance requirements to plans they are responsible for developing and maintaining. Exclude Local Government responsibility for maintaining/including hazard agency-specific plans, private sector plans, and school and hospital emergency plans applicable to the local district.

Recommendation 5: LEMA Infographic/Maturity Scale: Design a LEMA infographic/maturity scale that clearly outlines minimum LEMA requirements, essential operational information, and optional Local Government sub-plans/arrangements.

Recommendation 6: Clarify Evacuation Planning Roles and Documentation: Enhance Local Government's understanding of the Department of Communities' role and responsibilities in Emergency Relief and Support, including evacuation centre

procedures. Identify how this role aligns with the documentation in the Local Emergency Management Arrangements

4.2. LEMA Processes

4.2.1. Review Process

Key Findings:

- **Lack of Review/Amendment Instructions:** The current LEMA Guidelines provide information on when a LEMA review is required but lacks instructions on how to conduct these reviews.
- **Challenges for Local Government Staff:** This absence of procedural guidance makes the review task for Local Government Staff daunting and can result in outsourcing the major LEMA Review to consultants or non-completion.
- **Absence of Nearing Review Notice:** Local Governments currently do not receive formal nearing major LEMA Review notice.

Recommendation 7: Define Major and Minor LEMA Reviews: Clearly define ‘Major LEMA Review’ and ‘Minor LEMA Amendments’, specify when each is required, and ensure consistent use of these terms throughout the State EM Framework documents.

Recommendation 8: Procedures for LEMA Reviews: Include step-by-step procedural guidance on how to conduct a Major LEMA Review and Minor LEMA amendments. Acknowledging that single, linear procedures may not be sufficient due to the variability of context and subplans involved. Incorporate a multiple pathways approach, such as using a decision tree, to accommodate different scenarios and decision points for Local Government staff tasked with the LEMA Review.

Recommendation 9: Infographics for LEMA Review Actions: Design a new infographic to show clearer sequencing/pathways of Major LEMA Review and Minor LEMA Amendments actions.

Recommendation 10: Advance notice for LEMA Review Actions: Provide formal ‘nearing Major review’ correspondence to Local Government CEOs and LEMC Chairs informing them 12 months in advance of their 5-year Major LEMA Review obligations. This correspondence should outline available support and resources that can enable this (e.g., DEMC support, funding).

4.2.2. Approval Process

Key Findings:

- **Access to DEMC members:** The current LEMA Guideline and Model (p. 7) states that “The LEMA should be drafted by the local government after consultation from a broad range of stakeholders, including DEMC members.” However, Local Government Officers tasked with reviewing LEMA and drafting LEMA documents do not necessarily have access to DEMC members. Moreover, some DEMCs are not currently functioning well and or meeting as required (particularly, metropolitan DEMCs).

- **Inconsistent Review Dates:** The LEMA Improvement work has identified inconsistencies in how LEMA Major Review dates are calculated. Some Local Government's next LEMA Review due dates have been calculated from Council endorsement, others on SEMC noting, leading to some Local Governments not realising they are overdue.
- **Inconsistent Compliance Checks:** The current LEMA Guideline and Model notes that the LEMA document is to be checked by the DEMA for compliance, however consultation with DEMAs regarding how this is carried out in practice has identified inconsistencies in the interpretations of compliance requirements and the different checklist tools used.

Recommendation 11: Advice During Drafting Process: Remove the requirement for the DEMC to provide advice during the drafting process.

Recommendation 12: Compliance/Audit Checklist: Develop a clear compliance/audit checklist that can be used by both Local Government staff and DEMAs when undertaking a Major LEMA Review.

Recommendation 13: Roles of DEMC and DEMA: More clearly delineate the roles of the DEMC and the role of the DEMA within the State EM Framework, ensuring these terms are not used interchangeably.

Recommendation 14: Calculation of Major LEMA Review Dates: Consistently calculate the next Major LEMA Review dates from Council endorsement date rather than from SEMC Noting.

4.2.3. Non-compliance notification process

Key Findings:

- **Lack of incentive:** Currently, there is no LEMA non-compliance process outlined in the State EM Procedures. Moreover, there are no penalties or incentives for maintaining LEMA currency.
- **Ineffectual messaging:** The messaging tone of the non-completion process outlined in the current LEMA Guidelines and Model (Figure 4) is not empowering and lacks detail.
- **Incompatible actions:** The final 12-month non-compliance action, which involves notifying the Department of Communities, appears misplaced.
- **Lack of feedback mechanism:** It is not currently clear if the non-completion Letter is sent directly to LG CEOs and or LEMCs and if and how this information feeds back to Council.

Recommendation 15: Empowering Non-Completion Notification Process: Revise the non-completion process to be more empowering and incentive-focused (e.g., link to funding).

Recommendation 16: Role of other State Agencies in supporting compliance: Remove the notification to the Department of Communities as the final non-adherence action. Consult with the Department of Local Government and Sport and Culture, LEMA Program Board representatives on if and how the DLGSC could support Local Governments meet their legislative obligations.

4.2.4. Emergency Risk Management (ERM) Process

Key Findings:

- **Lack of Clarity:** Most Local Governments lack the specific expertise and resources to facilitate an emergency risk management process.
- **State Responsibility:** The SEMC is responsible for developing and coordinating risk management strategies to assess community vulnerability to emergencies (EM Act 2005, section 14e).
- **SEMC Support and Guidance Required:** Local Governments have been delegated responsibility for ERM through the State EM Policy and EM Procedure. This is a non-optional/first step action for a LEMA Major Review. Local Governments urgently need guidance and support on this aspect of LEMA.
- **Operational Remit Concerns:** Local Governments have expressed that they should not be responsible for developing and maintaining plans for risks that fall outside their operational scope. These responsibilities should fall under the relevant State, HMAs, relevant service providers, asset/landowner (i.e., the owner of the risk).
- **Evolving Risk Landscape/ Methodologies:** The National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG), assesses single hazards and does not account for compounding impacts. The NERAG methodology is currently under review. SEMC is shifting towards a more systemic approach to risk and there is a risk information tool being developed, however practical guidance for Local Governments is lacking.
- **Risk Processes Disconnect:** There is a lack of integration between Local Governments' [organisational risk management context](#), business continuity planning processes and the ERM obligations delegated through the State EM Framework.

Recommendation 17: Provide Local Government with clear guidance and resources to support their current Emergency Risk Management responsibilities.

Consider supporting information from existing local risk profiles provided by DFES to support a review of the Local Government LEMA.

Recommendation 18: Scale up ERM: Consider the scaling up the development and maintenance of ERM plans to the district and state levels, with input from Local Government.

Recommendation 19: Integrative risk processes: Collaborate with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) to improve the connectivity of Local Governments' risk management, business continuity and strategic community planning.

4.3. LEMA Structure

Key findings:

The current SEMC LEMA Guideline and Model aims to serve multiple functions: as a guideline, a council-endorsed policy/plan template, a community communication piece, and an operational tool. However, by trying to fulfill all these roles and address multiple audiences, it does not enable Local Governments to produce fit-for-purpose LEMA documentation.

- **Operational or strategic:** Despite Local Governments considering the main purpose of the LEMA is to support operational response and early recovery, for most Local Governments, the final LEMA master documents are not practical for use during an actual emergency.
- **Inaccessible Guidance Information:** The current LEMA Model templates include excessive guidance instructions throughout, and general EM information not relevant to Local Governments roles.
- **Rapid Deployment:** Local Governments highlight the need for a grab and go version of LEMA that includes up-to-date, essential information needed during an actual emergency.
- **Streamlined/Logically Ordered Information:** Local Governments request a "stripping back" of the LEMA Model template. Furthermore, Local Governments recommend separating the preparedness and prevention details from the information needed for operational response and early recovery.
- **Confidentiality and Accessibility Issues:** While the State EM Procedures (p.34) state that LEMA "should be practical and easy to use and must be easily accessible by community members," LEMA generally contain confidential information and simply redacting this sensitive information does not make this documentation accessible to community members.

Recommendation 20: LEMA Model Structure: Pilot a new Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) structure that distinctly separates: 1.) Guidance Information 2) A Local Government Council Policy/Plan 3) A Local Government Incident Support Plan 4) Local Government EM Sub-Plans.

4.3.1. Guidance information

Key Findings:

Feedback from WA Local Governments and a review of the Current LEMA Guidelines and Model indicates that LEMA guidance information should:

- **Online Availability:** Be available both in hard copy and via an online knowledge hub.
- **Navigable:** Be structured into PPRR with links and user-friendly navigation features.
- **Responsibility Overview:** Outline the specific Local Government responsibilities across PPRR.
- **Accessible Examples:** Include a portal of centrally located LEMAs/sub-plan examples/templates that Local Governments can access and adapt to their own context.

- **Scalable:** Clearly outline the legislatively required documents, essential operational information, and good-to-have plans/arrangements.
- **Role Clarification:** Include information/links about the role of the DEMAs and LEMCs and how they can assist with LEMA reviews, amendments, and exercises.
- **Stakeholder/Community Engagement:** Provide an overview of the key stakeholders that Local Governments should consider/consult/engage with during LEMA review processes and 'how' they can do this.
- **ERM Guidance:** If required in the new model, provide clear, digestible advice on the ERM process and what support and tools are available.
- **Procedural Guidance:** Include step-by-step procedural guidance for Major Reviews, Minor Amendments, and Approval Processes.
- **Streamlined:** Use simplified text/plain English.
- **Visual Aids:** Incorporate visual aids and process diagrams.
- **Hyperlinks:** Include links to other related resources (e.g. Animal Welfare, Spontaneous Volunteering)
- **Build capacity:** Through links and information on exercising, training and lessons learnt.
- **Non-technical Language:** Be written for people without an emergency management background.
- **Checklists and Tools:** Include checklists and tools for LEMA Major Reviews, exercising, and compliance/audit requirements.
- **Joint LEMA Options:** Include information about joint LEMA options/arrangements/subplans that can be scaled up to district/sub-district level.
- **Funding Information:** Provide links to available grants and funding sources for emergency management/recovery activities (e.g., AWARE, DRFA, DRF) and examples of grant projects.
- **SEMC Chair Address:** Include an address/foreword by the SEMC Chair that outlines:
 - The purpose of LEMA.
 - How to use the LEMA guidance information/online platform.
 - Background information, including how the new model has been co-developed/co-designed with and for Local Governments.
 - The intended audience.
 - Key themes and messages, such as the importance of Local EM planning, the link to SEMC Strategic priorities, and the importance of integrating EM as BAU (Business as Usual).
 - The SEMC/DFES support available to Local Governments to ensure they can maintain fit-for-purpose/current LEMA.

Recommendation 21: Integrate WA Local Governments' codesign feedback into the development of a new LEMA guidance framework and online knowledge hub, which WALGA can further test with Local Governments through a pilot program.

4.3.2. A LEMA Council Policy/Plan Document

Key Findings:

While questions remain whether it should be called a Local Government EM Policy, Plan, or Strategy, and how this document could be scaled to meet the needs of different types of Local

Government, there is support from the LEMA Working Group to separate the LEMA into a shorter, Council-endorsed document (made publicly available) that does not include the detailed operational information needed to support an incident.

- **Legislative Compliance:** This component of the LEMA model could be designed to address much of the legislative requirements required under Section 41 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005*.
- **Leadership Awareness Raising:** A LEMA Council Policy Document could help raise awareness, the profile of LEMA at the Executive Leadership level, and help Elected Members understand their role in emergency management.
- **Commitment Statement:** It would provide a statement of commitment to fulfilling the LGs' responsibilities across PPRR and in maintaining LEMA, managing recovery and administering LEMCs and other contextual obligations.
- **Integrating EM in Business as Usual:** It could help embed a culture of EM across LG and help facilitate the integration of EM into Local Government business as usual, business continuity planning, and integrated planning and reporting.
- **Scalable:** It could be designed to be scalable depending on a Local Governments size and capability. From a basic Local Government EM Policy of principles and roles and responsibilities to a more detailed Plan or Strategy with key deliverables outlined.
- **Content inclusions and design considerations:** The LEMA Group have emphasised that a public facing document should:
 - be written in a way that is easily understandable and not too long;
 - be high level and not duplicating the details of the LEMA operational support plan;
 - outline the LG's core EM responsibilities only (*EM Act 2005*, Section 41, 2a);
 - outline the role of the LEMC and Local Government's role in administering and chairing this committee;
 - include simple definitions and links to relevant legislation/LEMC guidelines;
 - be reviewed every 5 years in line with a Major LEMA Review;
 - include a Local government policy statement about emergency management;
 - outline the LGs EM strategic priorities/commitments/actions (*EM Act 2005*, Section 41, 2d);
 - include a description of the emergencies likely to occur in the LG area (*EM Act 2005*, section, 41, 2d);
 - outline the LG's existing EM bi-laws, plans, procedures, policies (both optional and non-optional) (*EM Act 2005*, section 41, 2e);
 - outline any key actions planned; and
 - outline any other relevant local and district matters relevant to EM (e.g. any MOUs/joint arrangements) (*EM Act 2005*, section 41, 2f and g).

Recommendation 22: Develop Model Policy/Plan Templates: Approve WALGA to develop three DRAFT Council model policy/plan template examples tailored for Local Governments of varying sizes and capabilities, to be piloted with the broader Local Government sector as part of the LEMA Improvement Program.

4.3.3. A Local Government Incident/Operational Support Plan

Local Governments are highly supportive of having a separate LEMA emergency management operational/incident support plan (dynamic document with fillable templates) that

can be used as a "grab and go" handbook during an event. This plan should be regularly updated and protect confidential information that has been known to be leaked through the current LEMA approval process and the requirement to make it available to the public.

Content Inclusions and Design Considerations: The LEMA Group has emphasised that a public-facing document should include:

- Plan authority, ownership, and distribution
- Purpose and objectives
- Area map
- Recovery plan (or link to)
- Local emergency support and relief plan (or link to)
- Arrangements for animal welfare (or link to plan)
- Incident support group information (potential meeting locations/membership)
- Incident escalation procedures/protocols
- Information on higher risk/vulnerable groups
- Special considerations/seasonal events
- Communication information (local systems, media management, public info, and warnings)
- Emergency management contact list
- Critical infrastructure list
- Resource register
- Key evacuation routes/considerations
- MOUs/agreements
- Glossary of terms/acronyms (or link to)
- Agency roles and responsibilities
- Cross-agency information protocols/agreements
- Other contextual information that may be required (e.g., traffic management)
- Guidance on authorisations and delegated authority required for emergencies (e.g. closure of roads)

Recommendation 23: Draft Incident Support Plan Template: Approve WALGA to develop a draft Incident Support Plan template to be piloted with the broader Local Government sector as part of the LEMA Improvement Program.

4.3.4. Additional LEMA Subplans and Arrangements

The current LEMA Guidelines and Model (Figure 1) includes only Animal Welfare and Local Event plans as optional LEMA plans. However, there is a much greater breadth of related LEMA sub-plans/arrangements that Local Governments could include as part of their LEMA. LEMA WG feedback indicates that sub-plans/optional arrangements for Animal Welfare, Business Continuity, Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction/Person-Centred Emergency Plans, Community Engagement/Disaster Resilience, Local Hazard Specific Plans (e.g., Heat Preparedness Plans), and Emergency Waste Plans are the most important LEMA Sub-Plans/optional arrangements.

While Local Government Climate Action Plans, Urban Cooling Plans, and upcoming Public Health Plans are generally developed by other Local Government departments and considered separate to LEMA they could be better connected to a Local Government's LEMA given the role they plan in building disaster resilience.

Finally, Bushfire Risk Management Plans (BRMP) and other Bushfire related Policies/Plans/Bylaws/arrangements are often considered separately from LEMA due to the responsibilities being designated through different legislation. As an example, currently there is no mention of a BRMP in the current LEMA Guidelines despite this being a key Local Government EM plan for many LGs. There is an opportunity to strengthen the integration/links to bushfire arrangements into the LEMA model.

Recommendation 24: Comprehensive List of LEMA Sub-Plans: Develop a more comprehensive list of LEMA sub-plans, and make examples and resources easily accessible to help Local Governments develop these.

Recommendation 25: Integrated emergency management responsibilities: Strengthen the integration of Local Government Bushfire related arrangements into the new LEMA model.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this report, co-designed by WALGA's LEMA Working Group, presents a comprehensive set of recommendations aimed at reforming the LEMA model in Western Australia to ensure it is fit-for-purpose for Local Governments. By addressing key areas such as consistent definitions, clear roles and responsibilities, accessible procedural guidance and the development of a new LEMA toolkit that separate strategic and operational information, the report lays out a path of practical actions for implementing Phase 1 of the LEMA Improvement Program.

Local Governments have provided extensive input over the past two years to inform the processes, structure, and content of a new LEMA model. It is now timely to progress the development of LEMA products/prototypes that can be piloted with the sector and then rolled out as the new LEMA model.

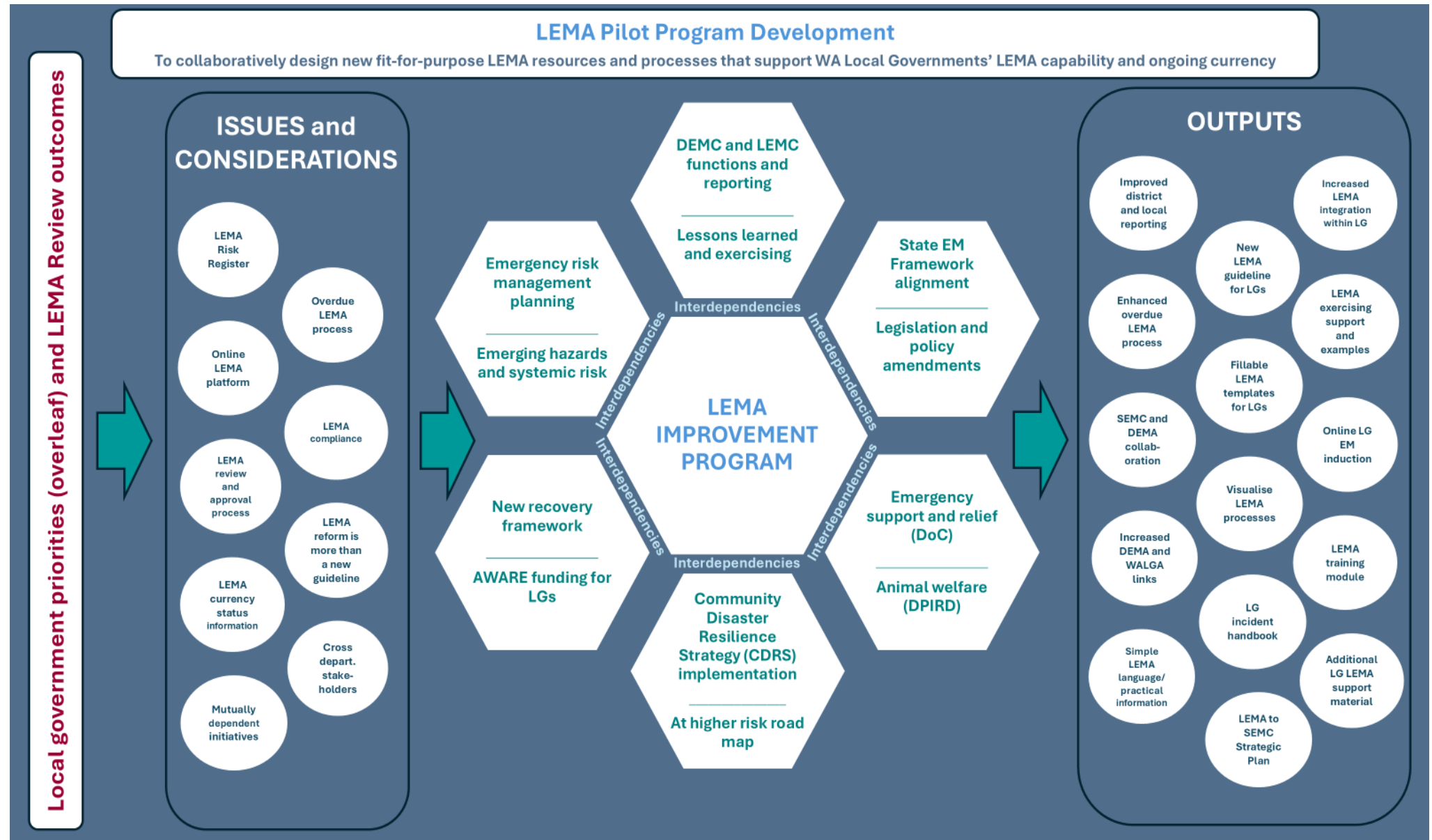
Appendix 1: WALGA's LEMA Review Outputs (2022-2023)

- [Local Emergency Management Arrangements \(LEMA\) Review Issues Paper \(July 2022\) WALGA](#)
- [LEMA Review Workshop Consultation with Western Australian Local Governments Building a Fit for Purpose Local Emergency Management Arrangements System \(February 2023\) AGDOTs](#)
- [Local Emergency Management Arrangements \(LEMA\) Review Local Government Survey Findings Report \(February 2023\), WALGA](#)
- [Local Emergency Management Arrangements \(LEMA\) Review Consultation with Western Australian Local Governments: Project Summary and Recommendations Report \(February 2023\), WALGA](#)
- [Local Emergency Management Committee \(LEMC\) and District Emergency Management Committee \(DEMC\) Issues Paper Preliminary findings emerging from the LEMA Review Consultation with Local Government \(July 2023\) WALGA](#)

Appendix 2: WALGA's LEMA Improvement Project Working Group

Local Government	Member	Position
City of Rockingham	Kolina Brennen	Emergency Liaison Coordinator
	Greg Whip	Emergency Liaison Coordinator
City of Wanneroo	Resmie Greer	Emergency Management Specialist
	Cher Groves	Emergency Management Officer
Shire of Derby West Kimberley	Jamie Bone	Recovery & Fitzroy Crossing Senior Operations Manager
Shire of Denmark	Renee Wiggins	Manager Community Services Responsible for Emergency and Community Recovery
City of Kwinana	Christopher Wells	Emergency Services Coordinator Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
City of Cockburn	Cassandra Mora	Fire and Emergency Management Manager
Shire of Victoria Plains	Mikayla James	Emergency Management Officer
City of Bunbury	Carrienne Graham	Community Emergency Services Manager
	Mark Allies	Team Leader Community Law, Safety and Emergency Management
City of South Perth	Meredith Skinner	Community Development Officer
Shires of Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Kojonup	Shane Harris	Community Emergency Services Manager

Appendix 3:



Local government LEMA priorities

MUST HAVES

- Single Local Government policy/ procedures
- Separate State-level guidance from Local Government information
- Remove technical jargon
- Structure into PPRR
- LEMA incident handbook
- Step-by-step guide on reviewing LEMA
- Animal welfare planning resources
- At higher risk planning resources
- Local Government EM communications resources
- Local Government induction pack/ introduction to EM training
- Local Government maturity assessment model
- Disaster funding guidance

SHOULD HAVES

- LEMA templates for different sized/resourced Local Governments
- More focus on business continuity/ logistics
- Infographics, flowcharts, and checklists
- Incident escalation flow chart
- First Nations engagement in LEMA resources
- Spontaneous volunteer resources
- Community engagement and resilience resources
- Guidance and support for Local Governments on LEMA exercising at LEMC meetings
- LEMA exercising and lessons management guidance

COULD HAVES

- Community support hub resources
- Planning for heat resources
- Local Government EM Model Policy
- LEMC action plan linked to SEMC priorities
- Tools to integrate LEMA across Local Government departments
- Integrating LEMA in IPR resources
- Protocol for inter-Council EM resource sharing
- Tools to enable resource-sharing collaboration

Proposed LEMA Model/Structure/Content

LEMA Guidance/Procedures

- State-level guidance available online and hard copy
- Logically ordered
- LG roles and responsibilities (in PPRR) esp. incident support/recovery
- Simple English/terminology/definitions
- Include hyperlinks – e.g. LEMC handbook, animal welfare guidance etc
- Clearly delineates optional/non-optional and good to have.
- Step-by-step guidance on reviewing, consulting community
- Clearer approval /non completion process
- Clear guidance on risk assessment
- Process flow charts/infographics
- Support available for reviewing, exercising
- Info about joint arrangements, distribution, funding

A Local Government EM Policy/Plan/Strategy

- Forward/public facing/community engagement focused
- A statement of intent/commitment
- Our LG area/possible hazards
- Our LG's responsibilities in EM/disaster preparedness/recovery
- Info for community – their role, where they can access info before/during/after emergency
- Any other local/district matters
- Our LG's existing EM-related plans, policies, strategies if any (e.g. BRMP, and other optional subplans)
- High level overview of any joint arrangements/agreements
- Simple glossary of terms
- Policy review timeline – 5 years (major review)

Risk management plan/register??

A Local Government Incident Support Plan/Arrangements

- Operational focused grab and go /confidential
- Area map
- Recovery plan (or link to)
- Evacuation centres/link to LERSP.
- Animal welfare arrangements or confirmation if there are none.
- Incident escalation procedures
- Public communications/warning systems
- Key agency roles and responsibilities
- EM key contact list
- Resource register
- Critical infrastructure list
- Evacuation routes/Distribution info
- Links to any other operational plans/arrangements
- Review timeline (updated annually)

Optional LEMA sub plans/arrangement

- Animal Welfare Plan
- Community engagement/disaster resilience plan
- EM Disability/person centred plan
- Supply disruption plan
- LG Business continuity plan
- Local event/crowded places plan
- Climate change plan
- Local Hazard Plan (e.g. planning for heat, flood, etc)
- Spontaneous volunteers plan

→ Risk management plan/register??