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State Emergency Management Framework

Overview of proposed revised recovery arrangements

This summary presents the key proposed updates to recovery arrangements within the State Emergency Management Policy, Plan and Procedure along with stakeholder feedback and the revisions made in response.

Topic	Proposed amendments as advertised	Feedback and revisions
State Strategic Recovery Priorities  Reference: Policy statement 6.1.9	Four State Strategic Recovery Priorities were proposed to replace the recovery objectives in EM Plan s6.1. The Priorities contemporise the former recovery objectives and incorporate the principle of 'build back better'. The Priorities provide guidance to government about what is important when making decisions about the planning and delivery of recovery operations in WA.	Stakeholders supported the proposed State Strategic Recovery Priorities and recommended stronger inclusion of CaLD communities and First Nations people. In response, a new priority—"Value First Nations Voice"—has been added, and others were revised to enhance inclusivity.



Policy



Plan



Procedure



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Model for State Involvement in Recovery 	The proposed model introduces a four-tiered framework (R1 – R4) to guide State involvement in recovery. As the complexity of recovery increases the level of State involvement will increase. For R1 recovery events, local governments lead recovery, drawing on existing State Government services when needed. In R2 events, local governments continue to coordinate recovery but may receive enhanced support from the State, facilitated by the State Recovery Coordinator. For more complex events – R3 and R4 – the State Government assumes overall responsibility for recovery coordination. A Recovery Coordinator is appointed for R3 events, while a Recovery Controller is appointed for R4 events. In both cases, local governments remain responsible for leading local recovery activities and engagement within their communities.	Stakeholders supported the proposed model and the roles of local and state government across recovery levels, but noted it was about coordination across all levels of recovery rather than State involvement. In response, the model has been renamed “Model for Recovery Coordination” and updated to include the role of Hazard Management Agencies (HMAs). Feedback was also received about R1 recovery events, and a new provision has been added that deems recovery events as R1 unless otherwise advised by the State Recovery Coordinator. Flexibility was also added to allow HMAs, local governments, state agencies, and WALGA to request an assessment or reassessments of recovery levels.
Recovery Level Assessment Support Tool 	The Recovery Level Assessment Support Tool supports the Model and is utilised by the State Recovery Coordinator to assess the complexity of recovery and recommend the level of State involvement needed. The Tool evaluates the complexity of recovery by considering the scale of disruption to community function from the emergency, level of coordination effort required for recovery efforts and capacity and capability of affected local government(s) to manage recovery.	No changes were suggested.



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Three phases of Recovery  Reference: Plan part 6	Three phases of recovery were proposed to assist with structuring recovery planning, operations and delivery: - Preparing for Recovery - Response and Early Recovery - Recovery Operations	Stakeholders supported the three recovery phases. The name of the Response/Early Recovery phase has been amended to 'Early Recovery' to avoid confusion between recovery and response operations.
Minister for Emergency Services  Reference: Policy statement 6.1.5	New provisions formally recognise the Minister for Emergency Services as the lead minister and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) as the lead agency for recovery. DFES responsibilities as lead agency were introduced, including maintaining state-level recovery policy and plans, supporting the preparedness and capability of State and Local Governments and advising the Minister on recovery operations and funding strategies.	Stakeholders were supportive of the proposed amendments. Based on feedback, the description of the Minister's role has been revised to emphasise the Minister's leadership in guiding recovery and coordinating advice, and clarify it is not operational.
Department of Fire and Emergency Services  Reference: Policy statement 6.1.6 & 6.5.1	A provision was also introduced to allow delegation of DFES responsibilities to another agency for a specific recovery event, where that agency has relevant expertise, resources, knowledge or stakeholder connections.	The description of DFES' role as lead agency has also been refined to emphasise its strategic focus and high-level responsibilities.



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Local government role and responsibilities  Reference: • Policy section 6.3 • Plan section 6.1 & statement 6.2.2	The proposed amendments define roles and responsibilities for local government under the new recovery coordination Model. In R1 and R2 recovery events, local government is responsible for leading overall recovery coordination. For R3 and R4 recovery events, where the State assumes overall recovery coordination, local government will be responsible for contributing to state-level recovery programming, coordinating local-level recovery activities, leading community engagement, and supporting initiatives that strengthen community connection, cohesion, and wellbeing.	Minor revisions have been made to authorise local governments to nominate and train multiple Local Recovery Coordinators. A new responsibility has been introduced for local government participation in State recovery governance structures, such as the State Recovery Coordination Group. The proposed requirement for local governments to keep the State Recovery Coordinator informed of recovery progress during R1 and R2 recovery events has been removed. Instead, local governments are now encouraged to contact the State Recovery Coordinator if assistance is needed.
State Recovery Coordinator [Event] Recovery Coordinator [Event] Recovery Controller  Reference: • Policy section 6.5 • Procedure 5.5	The responsibilities of the State Recovery Coordinator have been reviewed and updated. In addition, a new event-specific Recovery Coordinator role has been introduced, and the existing State Recovery Controller role redefined. For R1 and R2 recovery events, the State Recovery Coordinator will provide state-level coordination where required. In more complex R3 and R4 recovery events, the appointed Recovery Coordinator (R3) or Controller (R4) will take over coordination responsibilities, with enhanced authority to advise on priorities, approaches, and resource allocation. The Controller may also be delegated the power to direct State Agencies.	Stakeholders supported the introduction of an Event Recovery Coordinator position for a R3 recovery event and a Controller position for a R4 recovery event. In response to feedback, the 'powers' of the Controller to direct agencies have been removed and replaced with a provision for the Premier to define the delegated powers and authority at the time of appointment, in response to the requirements of the specific recovery event. The responsibilities of the State Recovery Coordinator have been refined to emphasise strategic coordination of state-level recovery efforts, rather than directing agency-level operations and a new assurance responsibility was introduced.



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Responsibilities of Hazard Management Agency and Controlling Agency  Reference: • Policy sections 6.2 & 6.6 • Plan section 6.1 & 6.2.1	Hazard Management Agencies (HMA) have an existing legislative function to initiate and support recovery. The proposed amendments provide more clarity as to these responsibilities which include planning and preparing for recovery, ensuring early recovery activities are commenced and planning the transition between response and recovery.	Stakeholders were broadly supportive of amendments. To ensure the transition from response to recovery is streamlined and efficient, the HMA's responsibilities for transition have been simplified. Revisions also clarify that where a HMA has delegated the responsibility for control of response activities to a Controlling Agency, they may also delegate the responsibilities for initiation and transition of recovery.
State Agencies – general duty and functional recovery roles  Reference: • Policy section 6.8 & Appendix F	The updated arrangements confirm the responsibility of all state agencies to support recovery activities based on their portfolio areas of responsibility and/or expertise. The State Recovery Coordinator and Event Recovery Coordinator/Controller may also request agencies to assist with information, data and expertise. All state agencies involved in the delivery of recovery programs will be also required to facilitate data sharing and contribute to whole of government recovery reporting. The amendments assign some agencies with specific functional roles on the State Recovery Coordination Group (SRCG), State Recovery Domains and to assist with specific recovery areas such as clean up and temporary accommodation.	Stakeholders were supportive of amendments. Minor revisions were made to enhance clarity around requirements and to include agencies that were inadvertently omitted from Appendix F State Agency Functional Areas of Responsibility in Recovery. Agency changes resulting from Public Sector Reform in March 2025 have been incorporated into the revised recovery arrangements.



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Membership of State Recovery Domains and State Recovery Coordination Group  Reference: • Policy section 6.9 • Procedure 5.1 & 5.2	The amendments assign some agencies with specific functional roles on the State Recovery Coordination Group (SRCG) and State Recovery Domains – Social, Economic, Environment and Built. These arrangements are already in place informally and worked successfully in recent recoveries.	Stakeholders were supportive of formalising the membership arrangements for the SRCG and State Recovery Domains, and the roles and responsibilities of these groups. Agency changes resulting from Public Sector Reform in March 2025 have been incorporated into the revised recovery arrangements.
Executive Government Forum  Reference: • Policy statement 6.9.8	Where there are complex policy issues or matters in a recovery event that require additional strategic oversight and direction by the executive level of government, the Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Commissioner may refer an issue or matter to an existing cross-government executive forum (eg the Public Sector Leadership Council) or convene a CEO-level forum.	Stakeholder feedback recommended broadening the provision to give the FES Commissioner greater flexibility, rather than specifying a particular group or level of government. The clause now provides for the State Recovery Coordinator (or the Event Recovery Coordinator/ Controller) to refer unresolved complex issues to the FES Commissioner for consultation or decision at the Executive Officer level of government.



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Greater emphasis on engaging community 	Proposed amendments introduce a mandatory requirement for local and state governments to engage communities to understand community needs and priorities, and in the planning, design and governance of recovery. This provision is intended to ensure the State Strategic Recovery Priority to 'enable community-centred recovery' is achieved. The amendments do not prescribe a specific engagement model, rather enabling a model to be developed that suits the specific recovery needs of community and local government.	Stakeholders generally supported the inclusion of community engagement throughout the recovery process, emphasising the importance of maintaining flexibility in how engagement is conducted. In response to feedback, the policy was amended to clarify that community engagement is expected across all phases of recovery, not just during needs assessment and planning. While some stakeholders recommended more specific direction about engagement models, on balance we decided not to introduce prescriptive requirements at this stage. Supporting guidance can be developed in the future.
Planned transition from response to recovery 	The proposed amendments shifted reliance on the Impact Statement as a trigger for handover and instead required the HMA to plan and manage the transition of coordination of recovery activities to the local government or State Recovery Coordinator. For R1 and R2 recovery events, transition arrangements required agreement with local government before handover. For R3 and R4 recovery events, a written plan was required.	Stakeholder feedback supported the position that transition should be agreed between the HMA and local government but highlighted the need for a flexible and streamlined process. Revisions have been made to clarify that handover is only required when ongoing recovery coordination is needed and to simplify the process. A formal written plan is not required – a briefing outlining recovery activity is sufficient. The handover is not tied to recovery levels (R1–R4) and should occur when affected areas are safe and accessible, and agreement is reached with local government or, where the State has an increased role in recovery, the State Recovery Coordinator.



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Requirement for an Impact Statement  Reference: • Policy statement 6.2.2 • Plan statement 6.2.1	Amendments will clarify that the HMA must prepare an Impact Statement for all Level 2 and 3 incidents, unless an exemption has been provided by the State Recovery Coordinator. The State Recovery Coordinator may also request an Impact Statement following a Level 1 incident. Where an Impact Statement is required, the HMA must use best endeavours to provide the Impact Statement before transferring the responsibility for management of recovery activities to local or State Recovery Coordinator.	Stakeholder feedback highlighted the need for flexibility to accommodate different hazards and incidents. New provisions have been included to enable the State Recovery Coordinator to modify the Impact Statement template and, in exceptional circumstances, the approval requirements. For example, where multiple local governments are affected, a representative group or body may be endorsed to approve the Impact Statement on their behalf.
Recovery Plans and Review / Evaluation  Reference: • Policy section 6.10 • Plan statements 6.3.1 & 6.3.2	Proposed amendments require local governments to prepare a Local Operational Recovery Plan for R2, R3, and R4 events; and the State to prepare a State Recovery Plan in R3 and R4 recovery events. Plans should be outcomes-focused and informed by a comprehensive needs assessment and engagement with the community and recovery coordination groups. Local governments will be required to complete a review, and the State an evaluation, of respective plans within 12 months of plan completion. The term 'review' is used intentionally for local government to ensure the process remains scalable and manageable. The State Recovery Coordinator will be required to brief the State Emergency Management Committee on findings of the evaluation.	Stakeholders supported the requirement for recovery plans and emphasised the need to keep processes streamlined for local governments. The requirement for local governments to review a Local Operational Recovery Plan (LORP) has been revised to a best practice recommendation rather than a mandatory obligation. A proposal for the State to conduct all evaluations of programs funded under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (Western Australia) was not adopted, as these arrangements sit outside the State Emergency Management Framework. An additional requirement has been introduced for the State Recovery Coordinator to brief the affected local government, alongside the SEMC, on the findings of an evaluation of a State Recovery Plan.



Topic	Proposed amendments as advertised	Feedback and revisions
Donations and Volunteers  Reference: Policy section 6.13	Amendments recognise that local governments, rather than the Local Recovery Coordination Group, have been coordinating offers of donations and volunteer assistance. Where support is needed, the Department of Communities will assist with donations, while the State Recovery Coordination Group and State Recovery Domains will support volunteer coordination. Public appeal arrangements were broadened, recommending that the State promote donation coordination through a centralised non-profit fund, rather than prescribing a specific fund. Corporate donations supporting State-led recovery programs should be directed to the State Recovery Coordinator.	The Department of Communities has offered to support local governments to establish arrangements for donation and volunteer coordination if needed, and the section has been updated to reflect this.
Recovery Funding  Reference: Policy section 6.11	As per the existing policy, individuals and organisations are primarily responsible for their own recovery. Amendments provide that recovery activities should be delivered within normal funding frameworks, including the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia (DRFAWA). Where DRFAWA is not applicable, supplementary State funding may be considered. All funding requests to State or Commonwealth governments must be coordinated through the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the appointed Recovery Controller.	The section has been revised to improve clarity. References to the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia (DRFAWA) have been removed, streamlining the language and broadening applicability.



Topic	Proposed amendments as advertised	Feedback and revisions
Public information and communications 	The amendments proposed nominating DFES, rather than the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC), to assist the local government where coordination of state-level public information was needed during recovery. All state agencies were required to consult with DFES before releasing information to ensure that state-level public information was coordinated and in accordance with requirements under the joint WA – Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.	Stakeholders were supportive of the proposed change from SEPIC to DFES but provided feedback on the need to limit the coordination to information about key recovery activities and not restrict agencies from undertaking their own stakeholder communications. The requirement to liaise with DFES has now been limited to situations where it is specifically requested by the State Recovery Coordinator or outlined in a formal state-level public information plan. The section has also been revised to include the transition of responsibility for coordination of public information from the HMA / Controlling Agency / SEPIC to local government, and DFES' supporting role. The term 'state agencies' has been broadened to 'public authorities' which includes local governments. This means the State Recovery Coordinator may request local governments liaise with DFES prior to making any announcements – for example, relating to programs joint funded by the WA and Commonwealth governments.



Topic	Proposed amendments as advertised	Feedback and revisions
Transition from recovery arrangements to business-as-usual service delivery  Reference: • Policy section 6.14 • Plan statement 6.3.3	Local and State Government recovery arrangements should be de-escalated or stood down when recovery services can be delivered through business-as-usual operations of the local and state government and extra-ordinary coordination, or when service delivery arrangements are no longer required. It is important the transition process is planned and managed in a coordinated and orderly fashion to ensure there are no gaps in service delivery for the community. The State Recovery Coordinator is responsible for planning and coordinating the de-escalation of state involvement from R3/R4 to R1/R2 as the need for state recovery coordination arrangements diminishes.	Stakeholders were supportive that de-escalation of recovery coordination support should be planned and coordinated but provided feedback that requirements should be simplified. The requirements have been de-coupled from recovery levels (R1-R4) and some of the operational level detail moved from the EM Policy to the EM Plan. The section in the EM Plan now also recognises that local governments may stand down local recovery arrangements when they determine ongoing activities can be effectively managed through business-as-usual arrangements. Amendments have been made to require de-escalation of State involvement to be planned in writing and involve consultation with local government, delivery agencies and community leaders.