



December 2025

Review of State Recovery Arrangements

State Emergency Management Policy, Plan and Procedure

Review Summary

Background

Under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, local governments hold the primary responsibility for managing recovery. However, many local governments across Western Australia face limitations in capacity and capability to effectively fulfil this role.

At the same time, the State is experiencing an increasing frequency and scale of disasters, necessitating greater involvement from the State Government to support recovery.

These pressures have highlighted significant limitations of the State-level arrangements within the current State Emergency Management Policy, Plan and Procedure (EM Recovery Framework). The EM Recovery Framework no longer reflects contemporary recovery practices or the operational capability of the State. It lacks scalability and flexibility to support complex recovery operations, and there is limited detail around State roles and responsibilities. Additionally, existing governance structures are not fit for purpose or agile in the context of modern recovery needs.

Review Process

In 2022, the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) acknowledged limitations within the EM Recovery Framework and requested a review of the arrangements. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) initiated the review but temporarily paused the process in January 2023 to support the recovery to the Kimberley Floods. The review resumed from mid-2023.

Preliminary Engagement (mid 2023 – 2024)

DFES's initial engagement focused on developing and testing ideas with key stakeholders and validating concepts and models through recovery efforts for the Kimberley Floods, Severe Tropical Cyclone Ilsa, Mariginiup Fires, and Bunbury Storm events.

- **Collaboration with Local Governments:** DFES worked closely with the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and conducted two focus groups with local governments to understand their needs and concerns and to test the early concept of the *Model for Recovery Coordination*.



- **Engagement with State Agencies:** DFES reviewed arrangements for the State Recovery Coordination Group (SRCG) and the four State Recovery Domains (Social, Economic, Built and Environment). With agency agreement, pre-formed membership of the SRCG and Domains was established in late 2023 to enable faster activation of these State groups. This approach was trialled during the Kimberley Floods recovery.
- **Interim Policy Endorsement:** In December 2023, SEMC endorsed the pre-formed SRCG and Domains, and an early version of the *Model for Recovery Coordination* as an interim policy position to guide recovery coordination arrangements until the review was completed.
- **Briefings and Presentations:**
 - DFES Deputy Commissioner Melissa Pexton briefed the Public Sector Leadership Council on pre-formed recovery arrangements in 2023 and on proposed amendments in 2024.
 - Multiple presentations were delivered to the sector as opportunities arose and upon request, including sessions with District Emergency Management Committee Chairs, Local and District Emergency Management Committees, and at local government events and workshops.

Formal Sector Consultation (3 February to 2 May 2025)

The formal consultation period ran from 3 February to 2 May 2025. All local governments, Hazard Management Agencies (HMAs), state agency members of the SRCG and Domains were formally advised in writing of the consultation period. A comprehensive program of briefings and information sessions was delivered throughout the consultation period. These opportunities were also advertised by WALGA through their EM Network.

Engagement from the sector was strong, with 39 local governments and 19 agencies attending a briefing or webinar. Additionally, two intensive workshops were held with the Department of Communities, a key recovery partner.

At the conclusion of the consultation period, 20 formal submissions were received.

Further Targeted Consultation (July – September 2025)

Additional targeted consultation was undertaken with agencies affected by *Public Sector Reform 2025* to assess how recovery responsibilities were impacted during the reform process.

DFES also met with six agencies that had provided formal submissions to clarify their feedback and explore how further revisions could enhance clarity and operational flexibility.

Sector Feedback and Revisions

The majority of stakeholders who provided feedback did so via an optional survey questionnaire (see Table 1 on page 6 for outline of questions) which also allowed them to provide comments. A smaller number of stakeholders submitted formal written responses.

Figure 1 (page 5) presents survey results by question. For each question, the total number of respondents is shown, along with a color-coded breakdown of responses:

- Teal = Fully Supported / Yes

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- Blue = Partially Supported
 - Grey = Not Supported / No

Most survey responses either fully or partially supported the proposed amendments. Feedback provided in addition to the survey responses included constructive suggestions to enhance clarity and increase operational flexibility.

A small number of stakeholders expressed disagreement with some operational level requirements, primarily due to a preference for greater prescription in requirements. For example, one stakeholder recommended prescribing a specific model for community engagement, rather than allowing flexibility to tailor the model to the context and needs of each community.

Minor revisions were made to the proposed amendments based on stakeholder feedback. The revisions focused on improving operational flexibility, enhancing clarity and improving readability of the documents. A summary of stakeholder feedback and subsequent revision by topic is provided in the [EM Recovery Framework: Feedback and Revisions](#) available on the State Recovery Arrangements project page at engagewaem.com.au.

Approval

The proposed amendments were circulated to relevant SEMC subcommittees as an out-of-session meeting item. Consensus agreement was provided, with two respondents providing conditional comments on funding. As funding arrangements are not in scope for the project and SEMC does not determine agency funding, these comments could not be addressed through any changes to the documents under consideration. Water Corporation requested inclusion in the Built State Recovery Domain standing membership, and the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport requested inclusion in the Social State Recovery Domain standing membership. Both requests were accepted.

The amendments were approved by SEMC on 4 December 2025. To maintain consistency with the approved changes, SEMC also endorsed consequential updates to the preparedness, prevention and response Parts of the State EM Policy, Plan and Procedure, and to the Glossary. These are detailed in the [Consequential Amendment List](#) available at www.wa.gov.au.

Further amendments to State Hazard Plans, State Support Plans, and Guidelines will be incorporated progressively as part of routine document reviews under business-as-usual processes.

Amendment Summary

The recovery chapters and related appendices in the State EM Policy, Plan and Procedure have been revoked and replaced with more detailed content and an updated structure to improve readability. The key amendments include:

Key changes introduced

- **State Strategic Recovery Priorities** established to guide governance, planning, and delivery of recovery in WA.



- **Model for Recovery Coordination** defines recovery coordination arrangements between State and local governments through a four-tiered framework (R1 – R4), supported by the Recovery Level Assessment Tool.
- **Defined Leadership Roles**
 - DFES recognised as Lead Agency for State-level recovery coordination, supporting a whole-of-government approach to recovery preparedness and operations.
 - Minister for Emergency Services recognised as Lead Minister for recovery.
- **New Position - Event Recovery Coordinator** is appointed by the Minister for Emergency Services in a recovery level 3 event (R3) to coordinate recovery and prepare a State Recovery Plan for that event.

Recovery Roles and Responsibilities Clarified

- **Local Government** leads recovery in R1 and R2 events; and in R3 and R4 events focuses on local recovery activities and community engagement.
- **State Recovery Coordinator** is a standing position that supports local governments to enhance their capability and capacity to manage recovery. In R1 and R2 recovery events, the State Recovery Coordinator also provides state-level coordination where required.
- **Event Recovery Controller** is appointed by the Premier to coordinate R4 recovery events. The Premier may delegate additional powers or authority to the Controller at the time of appointment.
- **Hazard Management Agencies** are responsible for commencing recovery and transition coordination of recovery activities to local government, or a State-level recovery coordinator / controller where appointed.
- **State Agencies** have a responsibility to support recovery within their portfolio and may be asked to assist with delivering recovery activities and programs. Some agencies have been assigned specific recovery responsibilities including:
 - as member of the State Recovery Coordination Group or the four State Recovery Domains.
 - to assist in a technical recovery functional area (e.g. clean-up).

Clarified processes and procedures

- Refreshed **State-level governance structure** (SRCG and Domains) with standing membership.
- Introduced **referral mechanism** for complex issues from the SRCG to Executive Government.
- Greater emphasis on **community engagement** by State and local governments but leaving the specific model unprescribed.
- Updated **public information arrangements** to reflect current practice where DFES, rather than the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator (SEPIC), coordinates



state-level recovery public information where required to assist local government / State Recovery Coordinator / SRCG. Where requested, or there is a public information plan in place, State agencies should liaise with DFES prior to releasing recovery related public information.

- Requirement for **key transition phases to be managed** and coordinated including response to recovery; and stand-down of recovery coordination arrangements and return to business-as-usual.
- Established **funding coordination arrangements** whereby DFES is responsible for coordinating supplementary funding requests to State and Commonwealth where recovery needs exceed regular funding arrangements.
- Established arrangements for the Department of Communities to assist local government in setting up **donation and volunteer** management arrangements upon request.



Figure 1 Summary of survey responses by question

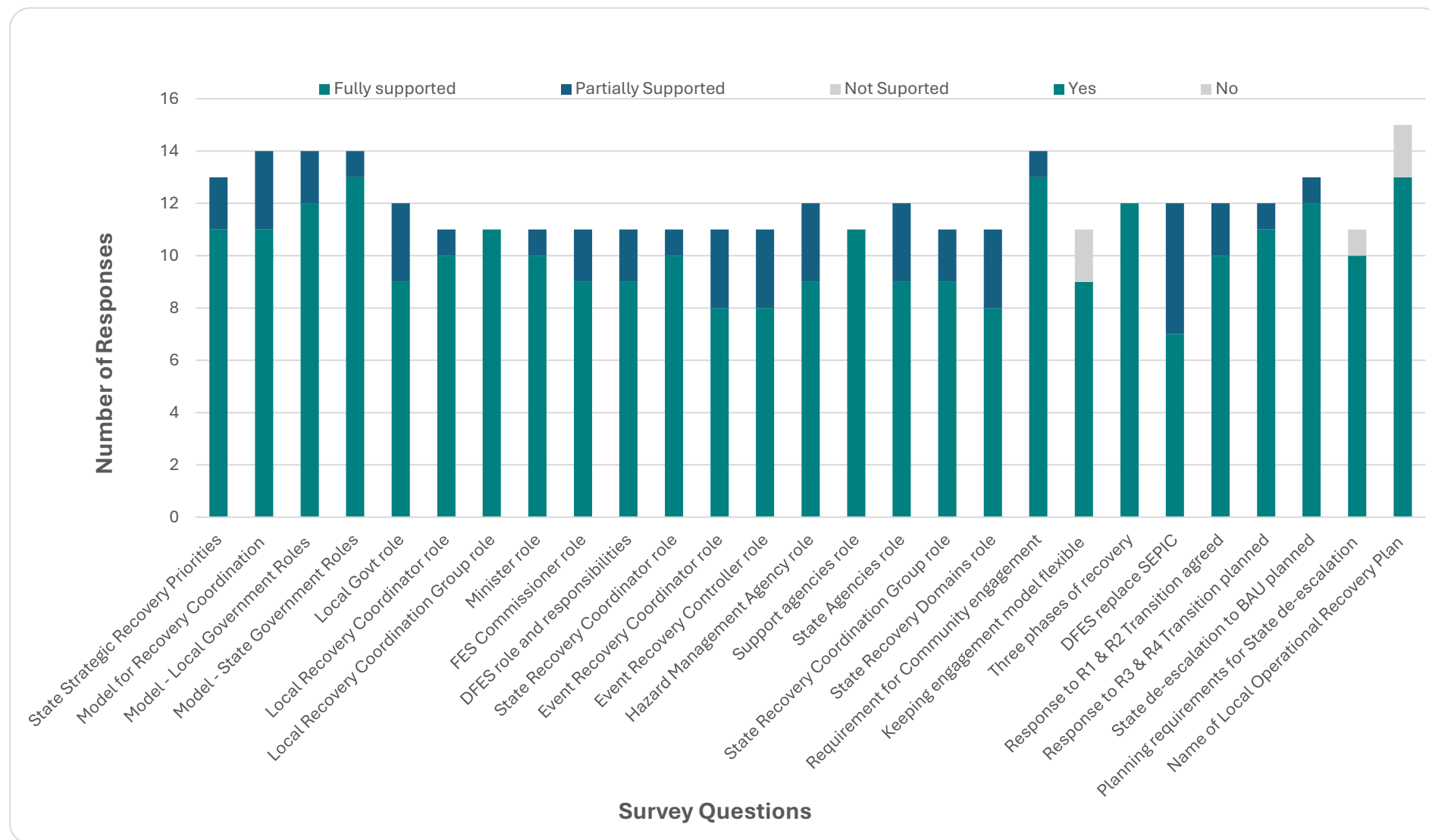


Table 1 Optional survey questionnaire on proposed amendments to the State Emergency Management Recovery Framework

No.	Question
1	Do you support the proposed State Strategic Recovery Priorities?
2	Do you support the proposed 4-tiered Model for State Involvement in Recovery?
3	Do you support the roles assigned to local government under each recovery level (R1-R4)?
4	Do you support the roles assigned to State government under each recovery level (R1-R4)?
5	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for Local Government?
6	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the Local Recovery Coordinator?
7	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the Local Recovery Coordination Group?
8	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the Minister for Emergency Services?
9	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner?
10	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services?
11	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the State Recovery Coordinator?
12	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the [Event] Recovery Coordinator?
13	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the [Event] Recovery Controller?
14	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the Hazard Management Agency?
15	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the Support agencies?
16	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the State agencies?
17	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the State Recovery Coordination Group?
18	Do you support the role and responsibilities outlined for the State Recovery Domains?
19	Do you support the proposed requirements for local and state government to engage community in recovery planning and decision making?
20	Do you believe the requirements for the community engagement are clearly described, sufficient and are flexible enough to meet the needs of different communities?
21	Do you support the three phases of recovery as a model for organising recovery planning and activities?
22	Do you support the nomination of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, instead of the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator, to coordinate state-level recovery public information and communication?



23	Do you support the proposed requirements for a planned transition of recovery coordination between the Hazard Management Agency and local government for R1 and R2 recoveries by agreement, considering their clarity and sufficiency?
24	Do you support the proposed requirements for a planned transition of recovery coordination between the Hazard Management Agency and State government for R3 and R4 recoveries with a written transition plan, considering their clarity and sufficiency?
25	Do you support the proposed requirements for the State to plan the de-escalation of state involvement in recovery and the transition to 'business-as-usual' service arrangements?
26	Do you believe the requirements for the transition plan are clearly described and sufficient?
27	Is 'Local Operational Recovery Plan' an appropriate name for the event-based plan local governments prepares for a recovery?