Getting to know the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland
Info Sheet: Accountabilities of Outcome 5

AI5

Community engagement

The community is central to disaster management. Community engagement entails actively involving the community in managing their risk. It involves collaboratively planning how the community's collective efforts will contribute to their safety. Community engagement builds local capability, capacity and community self-reliance. This allows entities to focus their efforts where they are needed most.

Outcome 5: Entities proactively and openly engage with communities

This is about how entities engage with their community: the kind of communications that they distribute and how they distribute them, the type of engagement activities that they undertake, how those activities are supported and coordinated, and what they achieve.

Examples of applying the Accountabilities to Outcome 5

Please note: the following are examples only and should be used to inform understanding of how the Accountabilities might be applied to individual circumstances rather than as a checklist

Governance

Roles and responsibilities have been identified, agreed to, and documented
- Entities have agreed roles and responsibilities (including back-up support) for engaging with the community, including drafting, approving, and issuing consistent information
- Entities have delegated personnel with the role to manage community awareness, education, engagement, information and warnings

Entities have been authorised to carry out their delegated responsibilities
- Entities delegate personnel with the authority to conduct community engagement activities on their behalf
- Entities have been authorised to engage with community members on sites managed by others

The authorising environment for decisions and approvals has been identified and agreed to, and is being utilised
- Individuals know who within their entity has the authority to make decisions about community engagement activities
- Entities work within the authorising environment to gain approval for warnings, for example they develop pre-prepared and pre-approved Emergency Alert polygons and messaging in collaboration with the State Disaster Coordination Centre Watch Desk

Arrangements are in place for reporting on and monitoring the outcomes of decisions and actions
- Community engagement programs include an evaluation component to monitor progress and assess outcomes, such as the evaluation measures available in the *Monitoring, evaluation and learning toolkit* available through the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre
- Individuals understand how to access and use the tasking log in their entity's disaster coordination centre to record outgoing communications during a disaster event

Decisions are recorded as they are made, and their implementation is monitored

- Entities have a process for recording decisions in relation to authorising community warnings and alerts, and it is used
- Entities monitor the warnings that they have issued to ensure that they continue to meet the community's needs

Doctrine

Roles and responsibilities are based on relevant doctrine

- The role and responsibilities of entities when issuing an Emergency Alert are based on relevant doctrine such as the *Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline*
- The requirements for entities to perform community engagement activities are based on relevant doctrine, such as the *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan*

The action or activity is based on relevant doctrine

- Entities base community engagement programs on well researched, fit-for-purpose techniques such as those in the *Community engagement techniques toolkit* available through the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre
- Entities use cross-sectoral doctrine such the *Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and Toolkit* to reach vulnerable parts of their community during engagement activities

Doctrine is agreed and shared between entities

- Community engagement programs follow national doctrine that is available to other relevant entities, such as the *Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience Handbook* developed by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
- Entities share their community engagement plans with other entities in their disaster management group

Common language is being used, and terminology is agreed and consistent with doctrine

- Entities are guided by the relevant doctrine such as the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience's *Public Information and Warnings Handbook* to write effective warning messages for the community
- Community messaging and education programs provide specific, tangible examples of what to do to avoid hazards, such as the guidance provided in the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience's *Public Information and Warnings Handbook*
- Community engagement activities use plain language, and the terminology is based on relevant doctrine such as the *Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary* and the *Queensland Disaster Management Lexicon*

People

Enabling networks and relationships between individuals and entities, both formal and informal, have been established and maintained

- Entities encourage two-way communication with the community and stakeholders through techniques such as community forums and focus groups, and leveraging existing community groups and networks
- Entities cultivate positive relationships with community leaders so they can establish public engagement, messaging and delivery channels in partnership with them

Training requirements are documented, and the necessary skills and knowledge are being met

- Individuals complete the necessary training to perform community engagement in their disaster management role, such as the *Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework* community engagement module

- Entities maintain training records related to community engagement and facilitate regular refresher training

Opportunities are provided for on-the-job training and development

- Individuals from outside the disaster management workgroup are invited to observe exercises testing community information and warning techniques
- Entities give personnel the opportunity to develop new skills related to community engagement, such as attending and participating in community forums, or learning how to correctly post information to social media accounts

Upskilling and cross-training provide a reserve of personnel

- Entities maintain a roster of personnel trained in community engagement activities as backups to ensure that the role can be filled if the primary person responsible is not available

Enablers

Enablers are in place, are fit for purpose, and are being used in line with agreed protocols

- Entities actively expand their knowledge of community networks using tools such as the *International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum* to identify the level of community participation needed in any public engagement programs
- Entities have a system to capture the knowledge, experience and shared history of the community
- Entities use the agreed processes and triggers for issuing the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) as identified in the *Queensland Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Disaster Management Guideline*

Enablers are accessible to the relevant entities, including the community if necessary

- Entities engage and provide information through a range of channels to cover different events and communication needs
- The community has access to ways to share information, local knowledge and experience to enhance disaster management

Enablers meet the needs and requirements of all relevant entities

- Entities develop mechanisms to help practitioners understand the engagement needs of the community, considering demographics and other matters of local relevance such as geographic isolation, transient populations, limited services or infrastructure, accessibility and vulnerable populations
- Entities identify and address barriers to engagement and make participation accessible to all stakeholders

Benchmarks for the performance of enablers have been established and are being met

- Entities regularly measure the performance of systems that enable community engagement to ensure that they are working as intended
- Entities are aware of current evidence-based good practice and use the latest techniques as the benchmark to reach the community and measure awareness

Alternatives or backups are in place

- Entities have alternative warning systems in place, such as door knocking and air raid sirens, should technology fail during a disaster event
- Entities can access the channels used to communicate with the community in multiple ways, for example social media accounts can be accessed on both a desktop computer and mobile device

Continuous Improvement

An established lessons management process is being undertaken

- Entities include community engagement activities in a lessons management process
- Entities have a process to capture community feedback to inform lessons identified and future activities

The capabilities required have been identified, documented, and aligned to recognised and accepted training methodology

- Entities conduct a training needs assessment to ensure their capability and capacity to engage and communicate meet the needs of the community
- Entities understand the capabilities needed to communicate and engage with their local community

A variety of exercising and testing methods are being conducted and evaluated

- Entities use discussion and functional exercises with single and multiple stakeholders to test communication and warning systems
- Entities consider best practice when engaging with the community, including the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of the engagement
- Entities use training and exercise opportunities to test public engagement activities and content

Insights are included in a lessons management process

- Entities gather insights about engagement activities from across the organisation to identify lessons and form solutions to benefit their community
- Entities craft insights drawn from community feedback and engagement observations

Lessons identified are shared with other entities, and with the community when relevant

- Entities share lessons identified with other relevant stakeholders to improve their community engagement capabilities
- Entities use their community and stakeholder networks to share relevant lessons identified

Improvements are made based on insights gained through testing, exercises and operational activity

- Entities update standard operating procedures related to engagement based on insights gained and lessons identified following testing, exercises and events
- Individuals update their work processes based on insights and lessons identified by their entity
- Entities adjust their community engagement techniques based on lessons identified and evidence-based research

Contact

Contact us for more information or to share your good practice ideas:
info@igem.qld.gov.au
www.igem.qld.gov.au