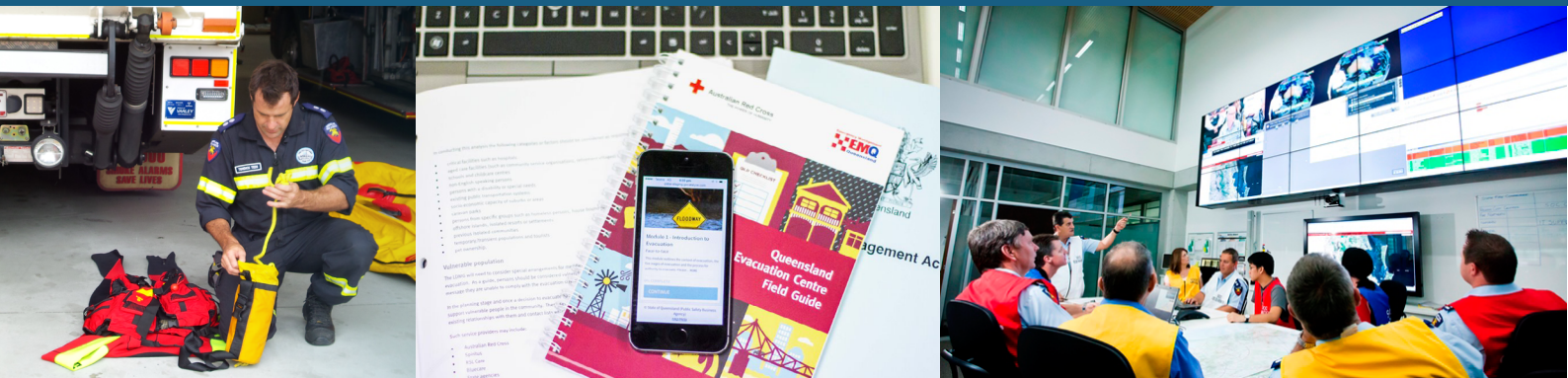


Evaluation of Emergency Management Training and Exercise Arrangements

Discussion Paper 1: 2014-15



This paper finds individual training arrangements are sound, but need to consider stakeholder requirements more. Disaster management exercises would benefit from better State direction and governance, and greater inclusion of stakeholders in their design.

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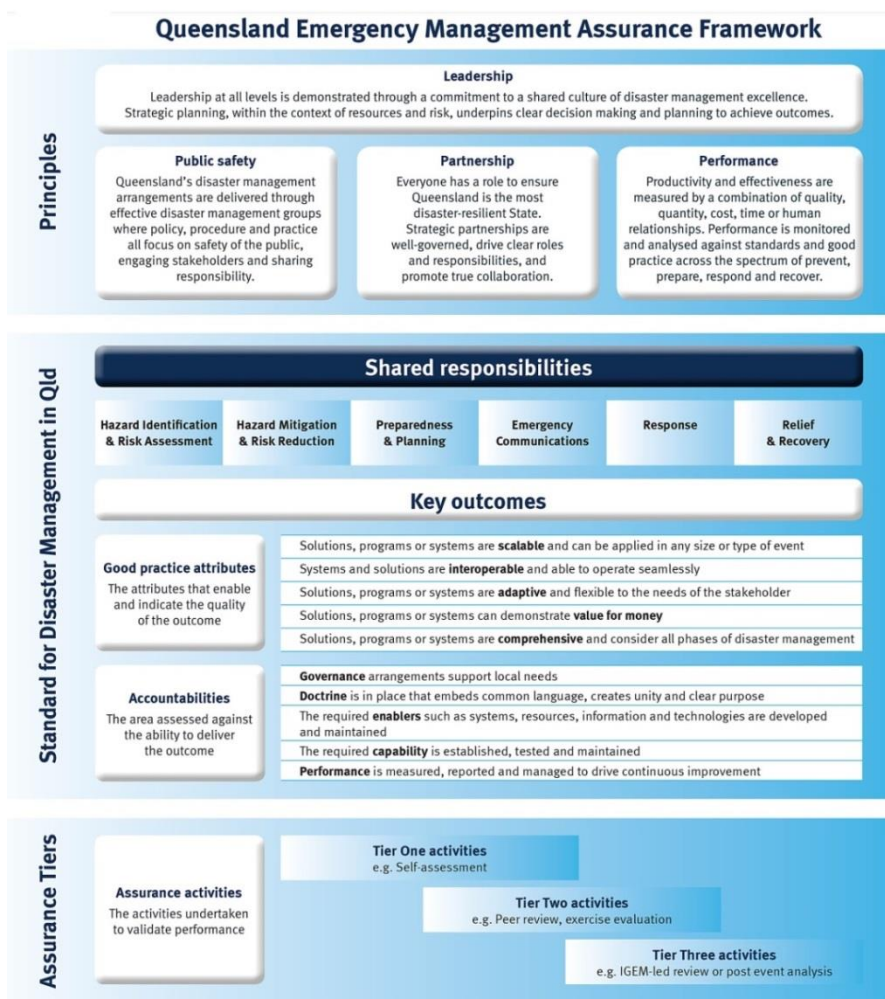
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The purpose of our papers

All papers and reports produced by the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management provide independent assurance and advice about the effectiveness of emergency management arrangements in Queensland. The Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management bases all publications on the Emergency Management Assurance Framework and the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

Briefing paper

A briefing paper provides the decision-maker with a summary of facts about an issue, or an overview of a situation or arrangements. The briefing paper may address opportunities for improvement or highlight exemplary practice. The briefing paper provides the decision-maker with the next steps to consider, which may include advice to entities.

Discussion paper

A discussion paper provides greater analysis of an issue, situation or arrangements than a briefing paper, considering trends, other sector or jurisdiction approaches or current best practice research. The discussion paper may address opportunities for improvement or highlight exemplary practice. The Inspector-General Emergency Management may suggest improvements to entities through advice, or, more formally, through professional practice considerations.

Review report

A review report provides a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of a particular disaster management issue, situation or set of arrangements. The review report is based on evidence, and may include discussion of underlying themes, contributing factors and root causes of issues. The review report includes findings, and bases recommendations for improvement on lessons identified, research and good practice

Research paper

A research paper may be produced as a result of a review report, or initiated by the IGEM. A research paper explores an issue, generates discussion and seeks best practice solutions.

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Executive summary

In this discussion paper we evaluate current emergency management training and exercise arrangements in Queensland and compare these with practices of other jurisdictions. We focus on six areas: governance, doctrine and accountabilities; linkages to government goals, risks and priorities; stakeholder engagement processes; comprehensiveness and shared responsibilities; alignment with national standards and good practice; and recording and sharing lessons.

We evaluate the arrangements for training set out in the Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework (the Training Framework)¹, and arrangements for exercises managed by either the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), or the Queensland Police Service (QPS). We do not cover the delivery of training, or the conduct of exercises, but we do include some stakeholder feedback on both matters.

We find that stakeholder needs would be better met if local government and disaster district representatives were more involved in governance of both training and exercises. A single governance structure may improve outcomes for both, considering they share common stakeholders. We commend the governance approach of Queensland's counter-terrorism training and exercise arrangements, and see benefit in it being replicated in disaster management, or indeed the two being combined.

Training arrangements appear well documented; however a single guide that identifies responsibilities would aid clarity and reinforce the authority of doctrine. We also saw scope to improve training material and its delivery to an agreed standard, to incorporate lessons from exercises, and align curriculum to the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland (the Standard)². The Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) and QFES review of the Training Framework is an opportunity for this.

We find that the role of exercises appears unclear in disaster management documents. There appears to be a gap at the state level between the training of individuals, and exercises that evaluate the performance of plans, processes and groups. A category of exercise – “a training exercise” - to enable newly-trained individuals to practice their skills together before evaluation would be beneficial. We also saw an opportunity to establish a method to set sector-wide priorities for exercises, and to improve how lessons from exercises are shared. QFES recognise this need.

The Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) expects that the paper's findings, particularly about practices in other jurisdictions, are considered by all stakeholders to enhance training and exercising arrangements. We do note however, that most stakeholders are planning improvements to their area of responsibility. Due to the broad, generalised nature of this evaluation, we will consider issues identified for a more in-depth review in our forward program of work.

¹ Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework, 2013, Public Safety Business Agency, Queensland, 2013.

² Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland, 2014, Inspector General Emergency Management, Queensland, Australia accessed 17 December 2014, <<https://www.igem.qld.gov.au/assurance-framework/emaf-standard.htm>>

Context

“Exercising is integral to the development of capability as well as to the preparation of personnel to carry out their function in actual events.”

Australian Emergency Management Handbook 3 ‘Managing Exercises’

Previous reviews have raised concerns about training and exercise arrangements in Queensland. In 2011 the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry cited:

“some general criticisms of the availability and effectiveness of the training provided by Emergency Management Queensland”, and a “lack of disaster management expertise in some regions..., in part because of the disparity in levels of training received across the state.”

In early 2013 Emergency Management Queensland’s (EMQ) post-event analysis of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald highlighted a lack of training had been provided to its own staff deployed to assist local and district disaster management groups. This analysis also revealed that training provided by the former EMQ did not meet the expectations of some local governments. More recently, the same issues are apparent in assessments of disaster management plans and exercises conducted during 2013.

Purpose

This discussion paper evaluates the governance and doctrine of current emergency management training and exercise arrangements in Queensland, and compares them with existing practices in other jurisdictions and sectors, to identify gaps and issues that warrant further review.

Scope

We did not set out to evaluate completely the State’s ability to train and exercise for disasters. We limited the scope to the arrangements the State has for these two functions to be carried out, as documented and understood by stakeholders in the sector.

The *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Act) requires certain officials to be appointed to district and local groups only if they have the necessary “expertise and experience”. It leaves judgement about this to discretion of the commissioner of the police service or chair of the local disaster management group. The Act also requires, in Section 16A, the Chief Executive [of QFES] “to ensure that persons performing functions in relation to disaster operations are appropriately trained”. Training, though, is not defined. Training for disaster management stakeholders in Queensland is undertaken in accordance with the Training Framework, according to the State Disaster Management Plan 2013-2014. This evaluation assumes that ‘training’ refers to a person acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes, or expertise, needed to perform a specific role. ‘

Exercise’ is defined in the Emergency Management Australia Glossary as

“simulation of emergency management events, through discussion or actual deployment of personnel, in order: to train personnel; to review/test the planning process or other procedures; to identify needs and/or weaknesses; to demonstrate capabilities; and to practice people in working together”.

With these definitions in mind we evaluated six areas, relating them to training and exercises individually where appropriate:

- governance, doctrine and accountabilities
- linkages to Government goals, risks and priorities
- the stakeholder engagement processes
- comprehensiveness and shared responsibilities
- alignment with national standards and good practice
- recording and sharing lessons.

We did not cover how training and exercises are conducted, however some stakeholder feedback about the effectiveness of these arrangements is included. Our scope included the delivery mechanisms for training, but we did not cover training conducted outside the Training Framework. We considered only exercise arrangements for disasters managed by either QFES or the QPS Disaster Management Unit through disaster districts. We did not consider, therefore, training or exercises conducted by local governments. Neither did we cover training or exercising arrangements of volunteer agencies, such as the State Emergency Service (SES). We did not cover training and exercises of the State Disaster Coordination Centre, as this has been recently reviewed separately, however some information about the exercising of state-level disaster management groups was considered. We did not consider training through the Regional College of Disaster Management as this was in the process of being established. Finally, we did not cover training through the Australian Emergency Management Institute, as this was outside the Training Framework.

Methodology

We identified questions relating to the focus areas, and posed these during written and verbal interviews to a representative group of stakeholders. Stakeholders were selected due to their knowledge of Queensland’s documented and commonly-understood arrangements. Stakeholders engaged during the evaluation included representatives from:

- QFES, Office of Disaster Management and regional staff
- QPS, Disaster Management Unit
- PSBA, Education and Training Services
- Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
- The Councils of South East Queensland Disaster Management Engagement Group
- Department of Local Government Community Recovery and Resilience (DLGCRR)
- Stakeholders responding to the IGEM’s letter seeking issues for review.

Evidence for this paper was collected in June 2014 when the Office of the IGEM systems and processes were being established. Since this time the Standard has been released and QFES and PSBA have implemented many restructure changes which may now address some of the findings identified.

Areas of focus

Governance, doctrine and accountabilities

The Standard now outlines how disaster management is to be undertaken in Queensland and establishes performance requirements for all entities involved in disaster management. Within the Standard are five accountabilities, including governance and doctrine, which inform the areas for assessment. Governance arrangements must *support local needs* and doctrine must *embed a common language and create unity and a clear purpose*.

Training

Governance and doctrine for training stems from sections 16 and 142 of the Act, and is set out in the Training Framework and various guidelines and plans. QFES has responsibility and is accountable under section 16A(c) of the Act *“to ensure that persons performing functions in relation to disaster operations are appropriately trained”*. In June 2011 the Chief Executive of the former Department of Community Safety approved the Training Framework. The Training Framework and the Disaster Management Training Handbook outline training to be undertaken by persons performing particular functions during disaster operations. The State Disaster Management Plan 2013-2014, and guidelines for district and local disaster management groups, give further guidance.

At State level, QFES and PSBA share responsibility for the delivery and development of training. QFES has accountability under the Act, and delivers disaster management training, based on the Training Framework, to local and district disaster management groups through a network of regional staff. However, PSBA is responsible for development and maintenance of the Training Framework and disaster management curriculum. Education and Training Services provide this service, supporting QFES to fulfil its training responsibility. Education and Training Services has a stakeholder consultation group to develop and review the disaster management curriculum, thus providing an element of governance. Membership of this group is limited to QFES and PSBA staff, who are responsible for ensuring stakeholder views and needs are considered. No local government or disaster districts are represented on this group. Local government has expressed concern about the suitability of training for their needs. Their direct engagement in this forum may ensure training is increasingly tailored to meet local needs.

The Training Framework shows responsibilities to undertake training, or ensure its outcomes are achieved. Individuals have a responsibility to undertake training relevant to their role. Agencies are also responsible to ensure they have adequate staff trained. Local government representatives expressed concern that the authority for mandatory training for specific positions was unclear. Ambiguity exists due to the multiple references, both implied and explicit, in legislation, policy and doctrine, and their authority over local government. Local government representatives suggested that, to avoid confusion, the State Disaster Management Plan should show all roles and responsibilities relating to disaster management training and exercising at any level.

Other jurisdictions have governance structures and authoritative doctrine that incorporate stakeholders at all levels. For example, the UK's Joint Emergency Services Interoperability

Programme³ was established to address recommendations and findings following reviews of national emergencies and disasters. Its doctrine is agreed to by the key stakeholders, and provides principles and guidance on ways of working that combine both training and exercising. Its strategic objectives include a training strategy, and a joint testing and exercising strategy for all levels of command. The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme's governance structure includes an Oversight Board, a Strategic Board and a Programme Board. All key stakeholder agencies are represented on these boards and have input to decision-making.

Finding 1

Greater inclusion of stakeholders in governance arrangements would ensure training requirements are understood and the training curriculum meets local needs.

Finding 2

Overall responsibility for disaster management training in Queensland is set out in legislation, and arrangements are well documented; however a single authoritative document, such as the State Disaster Management Plan, that shows who is responsible for what would aid clarity, and reinforce the authority of the doctrine.

Exercises

Governance and doctrine for exercises is covered variously in Queensland's disaster management documentation. The Act makes no reference to exercises. They are described in the State Disaster Management Plan 2013-2014 as "*a key mechanism for testing the effectiveness of the QDMA [Queensland's disaster management arrangements]*". In the Local and District Disaster Management Guidelines⁴, exercises are described as an "*activity utilised to train or assess personnel, evaluate procedures and test the availability and suitability of resources*". They are also described as "*one mechanism a group may use*" to evaluate the level of effectiveness of disaster management plans.

Both local and district guidelines show a link between exercises and training, and the obligation for disaster management groups to develop an exercise program to maintain capacity and capabilities. This guidance linking training to exercises is supported by local government representatives, who suggested that exercises should be used to validate training competency as well as testing capability. The local and district guidelines further assign responsibility for *conducting* exercises to local and district disaster management groups - with the support and advice of QFES, and for *participating in* exercises to group member agencies. QFES has confirmed that its training responsibilities include supporting disaster management group exercises at all levels. QFES also told us that it uses exercises to validate training, to ensure that functions are understood and can be effectively applied to disaster operations.

No responsibilities are assigned to state-level groups, however the planning and conduct of exercises for these groups has usually been coordinated with the annual State Disaster

³ Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme 2014, Home Office, UK, accessed 17 December 2014 <<http://www.jesip.org.uk/>>.

⁴ Local Disaster Management Guidelines, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, accessed 15 December 2014, <http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/Disaster-Resources/PGF.html>
District Disaster Management Guidelines, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, accessed 15 December 2014, <http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au/Disaster-Resources/PGF.html>

Coordination Centre exercise program. State level exercises are reported to Cabinet in the annual readiness cabinet submission.

Finding 3

The role of exercises in disaster management is unclear from available documents. There appears to be a gap at state level between evaluation of groups' performance through exercises, and the training of individuals covered earlier. In addition to their role in testing and evaluation, there is scope to emphasise a type of exercise as a "training exercise", to allow newly-trained individuals to rehearse and practice their skills together.

Finding 4

There is a lack of clarity about arrangements for state level exercises. There is scope for the peak disaster management body (Queensland Disaster Management Committee) to clearly assign responsibility for coordination of exercises and capture this in the State Disaster Management Plan.

The QFES' approach to exercises draws on references in the State Disaster Management Plan. QFES has responsibility *'to develop, implement and maintain the State's disaster management arrangements and systems'*, and is expected to provide consistency for exercises across the State by providing *"support and guidance to district and local groups"*. QFES confirmed its training responsibilities include support to exercising disaster management groups at all levels. QFES advised it uses exercises as a validation process for training to ensure that functions are understood and can be effectively applied to disaster operations. One staff member, based in the Office of Emergency Management, is responsible for coordinating an exercise program for the State. In 2013 a number of QFES disaster management staff from around the state also received exercise management and evaluation training to increase the capacity to assist local and district groups.

Disaster district groups have legislative responsibility, to *'develop effective disaster management for the district and to regularly review and assess the disaster management of local groups in the district'*. Currently, the QPS, through the appointed chair, has responsibility to "ensure, as far as practical that the group fulfil its functions". The Act prescribes that the effectiveness of both local and district disaster management plans must be reviewed at least annually. The local and district guidelines allow that this 'effectiveness' may be reviewed through exercise. District disaster management groups are required, by guidelines, to conduct annual exercises when no activation has occurred. Attempts are made to include district disaster management group members and other stakeholders in exercises. However, these attempts are not always successful. District Disaster Management Guidelines state that exercises *"should be used"* by the district group and members *"to enhance capacity and capability"*. However, the QPS considers there are insufficient legislative or doctrinal requirements for group members to participate in exercises. The Standard may help rectify this situation.

No stakeholder group currently exists to direct and oversee the conduct of exercises in the State. Local government representatives suggested the establishment of a core group of qualified exercise management staff to provide assistance and advice at both local and district level. They further advocated a combined approach to exercising by district and local groups to assist councils with limited resources to meet the requirements of the guidelines.

At the national level in Australia, the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee's Capability Development Sub-Committee identifies national priorities for capability development which are considered in the formulation of its three-year rolling national emergency management exercise program. The intention here is for jurisdictions to align their emergency management exercise regimes with the national program and provide input to an annual national lessons forum.

Alternative governance models in the sector are more structured than Queensland's current arrangements for disaster management exercising. The USA's National Exercise Program⁵ is underpinned by legislation. Its aim is to test, assess and improve the nation's preparedness and resilience. The program is objectives-driven, and capability-based. It uses a 'Whole of Community' collaborative approach, including exercises at the state, local, territorial and tribal levels. It runs over a progressive two-year cycle with a culminating capstone exercise at the end of the second year. It allows agencies to link exercises across states, and benefit from FEMA technical expertise. Governance is through the Homeland Security and Counter-terrorism Principal's Committee, which sets Principals' Objectives - common national preparedness priorities to which exercises must be linked. The governance structure includes sub-committees for implementation, resilience, evaluation and overseeing corrective actions. The supporting Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program provides a set of guiding principles and tools for exercises. It also sets out a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation and improvement planning.

The governance of Queensland's counter terrorism arrangements include combined oversight of both training and exercises. The Queensland Counter-Terrorism Training and Exercise Management Committee is similar, in this regard, to the UK's Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme. The Committee has a constitution, which includes member roles, responsibilities and financial guidelines, modelled on national arrangements and requirements. The Committee is chaired by the QPS, has representatives from all key stakeholders, and is responsible for managing a combined annual training and exercise program. Both the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme and Queensland's Counter Terrorism Training and Exercise Management Committee have similar governance structures, where decisions are made by a committee or board represented by key stakeholders.

Finding 5

Requirements and responsibilities for participating in, and conducting, exercises are set out in guidelines for local and district disaster management groups. However, there is less stakeholder involvement in the planning of exercises, and in actual participation, and less guidance of an overall exercise program than in other good practice examples. There is scope to improve the strategic level direction of disaster management exercises.

⁵ Federal Emergency Management Agency , USA, accessed 17 December 2014, <<https://www.fema.gov/national-exercise-program> Nationala Exercise Program 2014>.

Finding 6

Training and exercises have common stakeholders, and in both sets of arrangements we identified a need for improved stakeholder representation. A single governance structure, covering both disaster management training and exercises, may benefit the outcomes of each. The Counter Terrorism Training and Exercise Management Committee model may be a start-point, and further work might examine how a model could cover disaster management and counter terrorism.

Linkages to government goals, priorities and risks

We believe that by managing responses to disasters and disaster-related risks well, the sector is contributing to the Government's priorities. Legislative requirements and policy goals and priorities specific to disaster management are set out in the Act, the State Disaster Management Plan, and the State Disaster Management Group Annual Report.

In disaster management terms, the main objects of the Act are twofold. First, to help communities mitigate adverse effects, prepare for, respond to, and recover from, a disaster or an emergency situation; second, to provide for effective disaster management for the State. Principles of the Act require:

- disaster management to be planned across the four phases of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery,
- all events to be managed in accordance with policy, plans, and guidelines,
- local governments to be responsible for managing events in their area, and
- district groups and the state group to provide local governments with resources and support to help them carry out disaster operations.

The State Disaster Management Plan sets out four priority areas through which the principles are executed: risk management, local government capability and capacity, community capability and capacity, and effective disaster operations. The State Disaster Management Group Annual Report for 2011-2012, published in October 2013, points to priorities being informed by post-disaster and risk assessments, and the impacts of hazards on the community. The State-wide Natural Hazard Risk Assessment documents State's natural hazard risk profile.

Linkages between Queensland's disaster management training and exercising arrangements, its natural hazard risk profile and the Government's goals, and priorities vary. The Training Framework and disaster management curriculum align to doctrine and defined functions in legislation. Tailoring courses to include group-specific risks and priorities for particular audiences is the responsibility of QFES.

At state level, disaster management groups are generally trained as required and exercised as part of the annual State Disaster Coordination Centre exercise program. In previous years, high level strategic exercises have been conducted and the outcomes of these are reported to Cabinet as part of the annual disaster readiness Cabinet submission. We were unable to identify any formal governance arrangements to guide these exercises.

At disaster district level, exercise arrangements align with District Disaster Management Guidelines. Disaster district executive officers are responsible, according to the district guidelines, "for liaison (with QFES) in the development and conduct of exercises to test

operational preparedness". In practice they tailor exercises to suit each district group's risks and priorities, and are involved in exercising of local groups to ensure consistency and promote interoperability. District exercise arrangements also align to relevant QPS operational plans and manuals, and the QPS Strategic Plan, which covers the primary risks to Queenslanders as well as preparedness and response.

Both local government and disaster districts feel the tailoring of training and exercise delivery to meet priorities and risks could be improved. At local government level, representatives suggest that provision of training on 'political expectations' be included in the Training Framework, due to a current lack of understanding of government goals, priorities and risks. They suggest the use of third party providers be considered for the delivery of training to better meet local priorities. Local government representatives also suggest that past State exercises delivered in regional areas have not necessarily addressed local priorities and risks, and delivery of training and exercises across the State is inconsistent. They suggest the use of third party providers also be considered for the delivery of exercises.

QFES has plans to improve links between training and exercises, and priorities and risks. QFES proposes an annual review cycle, coordinated through the Office of Emergency Management, which aims to identify hazard-based risks and priorities across all levels of Queensland's disaster management arrangements. It is intended to inform both training and exercise requirements, however a process for the collection of data to implement the review cycle is yet to be documented or applied. The development of this initiative is a worthy goal. We note, though, that it is at an early stage and has yet to be promulgated to all stakeholders. Further, we believe it should be backed by a formal and structured partnership with QPS, and involve collaboration with others.

There is further scope to improve the links between training and exercises themselves. As previously stated, QFES conduct exercises as an assurance process for training. However, we were unable to identify formal feedback links between the two. PSBA's Education and Training Services support the need to link lessons identified from operations and exercises back to the development of the disaster management curriculum and that links should also extend to the development and review of doctrine.

Finding 7

There is scope to improve guidance, arrangements and delivery of both training and exercises; to ensure lessons from exercises feed back into both doctrine and training curriculum development.

Other jurisdictions and sectors show a closer linkage between national goals and risks, and exercise priorities. For example, the Queensland Counter-Terrorism Training and Exercise Management Committee uses Australian Government risk context statements to develop a Queensland risk statement, based on the applicable level of counter-terrorism risk for Queensland. The Committee uses this statement to ensure exercise themes align to Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee priorities. The US National Exercise Program is driven by Principal's Objectives – based on national preparedness priorities. QFES' proposed risk and priority-based review cycle in the development and delivery of disaster management training and exercising takes a similar approach. It could also consider the national priorities for capability development identified by the Australia New Zealand Emergency Management Capability Sub-committee.

Finding 8

We found no strong link between risk and priority. There is an opportunity to implement QFES' proposed risk and priority-based approach - possibly using the QFES annual review cycle - to consult stakeholders and develop formal sector-wide priorities for exercising. QFES may consider a similar approach to the Queensland Counter-Terrorism Training and Exercise arrangements, and consider the national priorities for capability development, when implementing this system.

The stakeholder engagement process

The State Disaster Management Plan 2013-2014 defines the Queensland's disaster management arrangements as based upon partnership arrangements between State and local government. It follows that discussions between partners about all aspects of the arrangements are fundamental if those arrangements are to work well.

Training

PSBA's Education and Training Services are responsible for the development of the disaster management training curriculum. They use a stakeholder consultation group to seek feedback in its development. This group is made up of seven QFES emergency management staff and one Education and Training Services representative. Previously the group included a representative from the former EMQ Disaster Management Standards Branch to maintain the link between the curriculum and disaster management doctrine. Replacement of this representative remains subject to the QFES structural review, but is noted as a priority by PSBA Education and Training Services.

The QFES emergency management staff on the stakeholder consultation group are each responsible for seeking stakeholder feedback from at least one local government in their area. However, when changes to the curriculum are proposed, feedback is sought from QPS and LGAQ. Education and Training Services also establish subject matter advisory groups to include a wider range of stakeholders and expertise when considered necessary.

Comments from stakeholders suggest there is still scope for improvement in consultation. During the review some evidence emerged that induction training and QDMA training were being confused and there is scope for clearer definition of these two requirements. Local government representatives expressed concern over the lack of consultation about how their training requirements fed into the delivery of disaster management training. They advised training was not always tailored to suit local needs, and sometimes was considered a burden when people already had the necessary skills to perform a role. They suggested the current mandatory training should be adjustable to take account of experience, qualifications and existing workplace training. QPS suggested that training delivered by QFES also needed to be more contextualised to meet the needs of district disaster management groups.

Exercises

Local government views of the State's effort to consult over exercises are poor. Stakeholder consultation about state-run exercises relies heavily on regional QFES staff. However, local government representatives suggest there is often a failure to incorporate local needs, objectives and scenarios in the planning process of state-run exercises. They suggest better stakeholder consultation processes to ensure such needs and objectives are included. They also suggest that exercises move from event-based scenarios to objectives-based methods

that take into account all participating agency and group requirements. A graduated approach to exercises would also be beneficial to promote the development of competency, including pre-training where required.

Other models of exercise management formalise engagement with stakeholders over exercises. The Queensland Counter-Terrorism Training and Exercise Management Committee engages members from multiple agencies to develop a joint annual program of exercises. When exercises are planned, member agencies and stakeholders are encouraged to identify training requirements for their staff and these are addressed prior to the exercise. The Committee also uses an objectives-based approach to exercise development, asking for stakeholder-specific objectives and key performance indicators prior to scenario planning. Where stakeholders include objectives, they are then expected to help write, control and evaluate the exercise. These arrangements ensure stakeholders are sufficiently involved with the process to address their needs.

QFES intend to upgrade their current exercise planning and delivery. They plan to introduce an outcomes-based program to ensure exercises align to stakeholder needs. However, the program will continue to rely heavily on the regional QFES staff to coordinate it. QFES also advises this program does not intend to prescribe specific tools or processes for exercise development or delivery. Under the new program QFES emergency management staff will be responsible for tailoring material to suit local needs, and providing guidance and advice to local and district groups involved in the exercise program. QFES advises the program will take a risk-based approach, and consider recent activations and competing priorities.

Finding 9

Greater use should be made of local government and disaster district representatives in the development, review and delivery of training curriculum. This may be improved through wider stakeholder involvement in governance arrangements and increased collaboration on regional delivery requirements.

Comprehensiveness and shared responsibilities

The Standard includes six Shared Responsibilities that represent the key areas of an effective disaster management program as displayed in figure 1.



Figure 1. Emergency Management Assurance Framework Shared Responsibilities.

Governments, entities and practitioners should deliver against all six Shared Responsibilities if they are to meet community and government expectations. Both training and exercise arrangements are expected to include all Shared Responsibilities. As QFES consider that state-run exercises provide assurance about training, only the disaster management training curriculum was evaluated.

The disaster management training curriculum is aligned to the comprehensive approach to disaster management, covering prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and identified functions in legislation and doctrine. We did not examine the curriculum content in detail; however the first two Shared Responsibilities dealing with hazard and risk were identified as potential gaps in the Training Framework. PSBA Education and Training Services confirmed these topics have been considered for inclusion under the Training Framework in the past. All other shared responsibilities are covered to varying extents, through specific courses that address the topic, or inclusion in a wider course. PSBA Education and Training Services advise they intend to undertake a review of the Training Framework in 2014/15.

Finding 10

The review of the Training Framework in 2014/15 is an opportunity for closer alignment with the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

Alignment with national standards and good practice

One measure of effectiveness of Queensland's training and exercising arrangements is the extent to which they compare against any relevant standard. The Australian Skills Quality Authority regulates registered training organisations and the training courses they deliver. Guidelines and a national reference exist for disaster management exercises in the Australian Emergency Management Handbook series. As a minimum, Queensland's training and exercise arrangements should align to the principles of these two authorities.

Training

The disaster management training curriculum is contextualised for Queensland stakeholders. PSBA hold Registered Training Organisation status on behalf of QFES. While disaster management training courses are not nationally recognised or accredited, Registered Training Organisation standards are applied to the curriculum's development and its delivery. Education and Training Services training policy requires QFES trainers to hold Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

We found different views about the importance of aligning training to the policy set by Education and Training Services. QFES, who deliver training, do not necessarily impose the need for mandatory qualifications for disaster management trainers. But local government representatives suggest that training under the Training Framework was not always delivered to the appropriate standard for their needs and have emphasised the importance of trainers having first-hand knowledge of the subject they are teaching.

We note there are capacity gaps that limit the delivery of training to set standards. These gaps may be filled by encouraging a range of agencies to deliver training under the Training Framework, and assessing the ability of individual trainers rather than relying on qualifications alone.

While the review concentrated on training under the Training Framework, we recognise that other disaster management training exists outside it. Simple participation in training under the Training Framework does not automatically confer expertise or experience; neither does the absence of the training preclude people from having that expertise and experience.

Finding 11

There is an opportunity to establish more precisely what stakeholders want from disaster management training, and then ensure its delivery to a standard agreed to by both stakeholder and training deliverer.

Finding 12

There is a lack of consistency in trainer qualifications and the standard of delivery. Further work by PSBA and QFES should identify the best balance between standards for training delivery, qualifications and experience of individual trainers across a range of agencies and achieving the necessary expertise and experience in disaster management for officers performing functions under the Act.

Exercises

The Australian Emergency Management Handbook 3 – *Managing Exercises* - emphasises the importance of a structured approach and an exercise management team with understanding of project management, stakeholder engagement, and risk management. QFES recognise that, for an exercise management training strategy to be effective, staff should be appropriately trained and then provided the means to maintain their capability. A substantial number of QFES staff and some local government representatives have been trained in exercise management and exercise evaluation, using the Australian Emergency Management Institute nationally-accredited course. At disaster district level, all district executive officers have Advanced Diploma qualifications in Emergency Management and many have also completed accredited and non-accredited courses in exercise management and evaluation through the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee or the Australian Emergency Management Institute.

This approach to individual qualifications for management of exercises appears sound, but the effect of such training does not appear to benefit exercise delivery at local level. Despite these individual qualifications, local government representatives consider that exercises conducted by the state are not always delivered to standards required. In section 1 we recorded local governments' desire for a core group of qualified exercise management staff to assist with exercises at local level. The findings about governance in that section, if combined with the evident knowledge in the sector, may result in better outcomes for locally delivered exercises.

The Australia and New Zealand counter-terrorism sector ensures consistency in exercise management methods and process across jurisdictions. The sector offers specific courses to stakeholders for consistency in exercise management. These courses are considered best practice by participating agencies and are fully endorsed and delivered throughout all member jurisdictions.

Finding 13

Queensland appears to demonstrate good practice in training people to manage exercises, and this capability needs to be maintained. There is an opportunity to better coordinate this through improved governance. Finding 6 also highlighted similarities in exercise management between the counter-terrorism and disaster management arrangements. Further work might establish how these could best be exploited.

Recording and sharing lessons

The Australian Emergency Management Handbook 8, *Lessons Management*, views managing lessons as integral to the continuous improvement of capability, as well as to the preparation of personnel to carry out their functions during actual events. Lessons identified as a result of training and exercises should therefore be recorded and shared.

Education and Training Services have a process to capture lessons from courses delivered. These lessons are used to prioritise changes to the disaster management curriculum. However, directors of exercises or operations are not ensuring that lessons identified from such activities are passed to curriculum writers. Education and Training Services consider this a gap. We also found that, at disaster district and other levels, there is scope for greater sharing of lessons and debriefs so that results are not kept within one organisation but shared more generally across the disaster management sector.

Local government representatives were not aware of any process or systems for lesson-sharing between stakeholders. They advocated for a central register of lessons, to allow exercise planners to consider identified areas for improvement. We support this concept of a central repository of lessons.

Good practice for sharing lessons already exists in other jurisdictions. The UK's Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme aims to improve the way police, fire and ambulance services work together during major and complex incidents. The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme considers it essential that lessons identified from joint operations from events or exercises be captured, addressed, shared and acted on to promote continuous improvement and recognise good practice. The USA's Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program⁶ also support the sharing of lessons and achieve this by providing tools, processes and systems for the exercise community to use.

QFES advised they are planning to introduce a system for the collection of findings and outcomes from exercises and operations which would link into their annual review cycle. They recognise the need for a system that captures lessons identified, responsibility, options considered, actions taken and result. Previously, Emergency Management Queensland established a basic lessons management system where results from state-conducted exercises were combined with recommendations from post-event analyses, both within Queensland and from other jurisdictions. This was primarily used for internal purposes as it was not in a format to allow easy access by all stakeholders. The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme and Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program are examples of good practice in this area.

Finding 14

Greater sharing of lessons from exercises is identified as an area for improvement. There is an opportunity for the future QFES system to consider previous work in this area and lessons management systems in other jurisdictions.

⁶ Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program, 2014, Federal Emergency Management Agency, USA, accessed 17 December 2014 <<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/32326>>

Next steps

- The Office of the IGEM has the expectation that the paper's findings, particularly regarding the practices in other jurisdictions, will be considered by all stakeholders in future enhancements of training and exercising arrangements.
- The Office of IGEM notes that QFES is already proposing to implement enhancements to training and exercising arrangements. This initiative is a worthy goal, however a formal and structured partnership arrangement with QPS, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, would ensure the approach provided true value to the disaster management community. In light of this proposed work, and due to the high level nature of this review, the Office of the IGEM will consider the need for a more in-depth review of training and exercising arrangements in Queensland in its forward programme of work.

These next steps, and their implementation, are aimed at enabling greater confidence in Queensland's emergency management arrangements. In this respect this discussion paper was provided to stakeholders for their consideration and comment, and their views have been considered and are represented to the extent warranted.

Appendix A: Comments

A copy of this report was provided to all stakeholders engaged during the evaluation with an option to provide comments. Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of comments rests with the head of these entities. We believe the comments below are addressed in the paper, but also that their emphasis is worth recording verbatim.

Manager, Disaster Management Planning and Operations, Redlands City Council

Comments compiled on behalf of the Councils of South East Queensland Disaster Management Engagement Group.

On the level and appropriateness of training required.

Whilst base level disaster management understanding is critical for all members of disaster management groups, it is often the diversity of their individual organisational experience that is critical. Attempting to make “everyone” a disaster management expert is not what the disaster management group is about. It is designed to bring expertise and experience into groups to ensure a variety of knowledge and capacity is applied. To highlight this, I would use Telstra as an example. I don’t pretend to know how to repair a phone line, but I do know who to call to get it done in a disaster event. I rely on their expert knowledge. This is the expertise that a local disaster management group needs.

On the implementation of exercise arrangements.

I acknowledge that the implementation of exercise arrangements was outside the scope of this short discussion paper. But I would like to acknowledge work by QFES at regional level in partnership with local and district groups across multiple councils to prepare exercises SHAKE IT in 2013, and HEADACHE and ASPIRIN in 2014. I believe the work done by this team might provide a template of the future in the delivery of multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional exercises.

Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)

On training standards.

We should be well past the time where it is ok for people without a skill or competency in the unit to deliver it to others;

- From a governance point of view it gives a false sense of confidence in capability.
- There should be better links to a competency based framework to allow a better integration into the National (training) Framework.
- There should be an easier and more accessible recognition of prior learning and/or existing competencies.
- Assessment and accreditation is also an important element in many of the required units.

The development of specific delivery options is important in responding to the needs of rural and remote areas but also to allow flexibility for learning for all those involved.

On the QFES proposed risk and priority based approach to supporting exercises.

There is a concern that QFES “risk and priority-based approach” for exercises and training will not recognise that training and exercising is an expectation for all local and district groups. This expectation is not based on assessed risk or perceived priority - it is a requirement.