



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

AUSSECPLAN

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DOMESTIC
SECURITY CRISIS PLAN

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1. Acronyms

AGCA	Australian Government Coordinating Agency
AGCMF	Australian Government Crisis Management Framework
CLO	Home Affairs Community Liaison Officer
DCG EMR	Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management Response, NEMA
DFACA	Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority
GWO	Global Watch Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
HALO	Home Affairs Liaison Officer
LO	Australian Government Liaison Officer
NCM	National Coordination Mechanism
NCM-AUSGOV	Australian Government National Coordination Mechanism
NED	National Emergency Declaration
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NSR	Australian Government National Situation Room
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
RFA	Request for Assistance

2. Definitions

Australian Government Coordinating Agency	The agency required to lead the coordination across the Australian Government for a significant crisis (or concurrent crises with converging consequences) caused by one or more identified hazards under the AGCMF. This agency also leads the consequence management activities within its agency functions and sector-specific responsibilities.
Australian Government Crisis Communication Guidelines	Provides guidance on coordinating whole-of-Australian Government crisis communication, including development and dissemination of talking points, media holding lines and response strategies for media management and collaboration with state and territory operations centres.
Early recovery	The immediate and short-term measures for the restoration and improvement of the livelihoods, health, economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of a crisis-affected community.
Enabling Agency	An Australian Government agency that administers relevant programs, provides specialist technical, scientific, intelligence or information capabilities, service delivery, or conducts any other enabling activities to support consequence management activities.
Lead Coordinating Senior Official	The designated senior official within an AGCA who is responsible for leading the Australian Government coordination for a significant crisis (or concurrent crises with converging consequences).
Lead Minister	The Australian Government minister responsible for leading coordination in response to a significant crisis (or concurrent crises with converging consequences) caused by one or more identified hazards under the AGCMF.
Preparedness	Near-term and longer-term arrangements to ensure that, should a crisis occur, the required resources, capabilities and services can be efficiently mobilised and deployed.
Relief	Meeting the essential needs of food, water, shelter, energy, communications and medicines for people affected by a crisis event.
Response	Actions taken in anticipation of, during, or immediately after a crisis to ensure that its impacts are minimised, and that those affected are supported as quickly as possible.
Sector Lead Agency	An Australian Government agency that contributes to whole-of-Australian Government crisis coordination activities and leads the consequence management activities relevant to agency functions and sector-specific responsibilities.

3. Authorising Environment

3.1. Authority

The Australian Government Domestic Security Crisis Plan (AUSSECPLAN) derives its authority from the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF). The AGCMF outlines the arrangements enabling the Australian Government's 'all hazards' crisis management approach and is underpinned by hazard-specific national plans.

AUSSECPLAN is prepared and maintained by the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs). It establishes Australian Government coordination arrangements for domestic-security related crises. AUSSECPLAN supersedes the Interim AUSSECPLAN.

AUSSECPLAN is approved by the Head of National Security at Home Affairs.

3.2. Version Details

Version #	Date of Issue	Brief description of change
1	17 September 2025	Initial release, superseding Interim AUSSECPLAN.

4. Introduction

4.1. Purpose

The Australian Government Domestic Security Crisis Plan (AUSSECPLAN) outlines the Australian Government's mechanisms and coordination arrangements for responding¹ to a domestic security-related crisis, excluding terrorism, cyber and incidents related to transport, telecommunications, or energy supply or availability (which are covered by other AGCMF national plans). This may include violent civil unrest, foreign interference, sabotage and espionage.

AUSSECPLAN details the roles and responsibilities for Home Affairs and other key agencies in supporting near-term preparedness, response and early recovery to significant domestic security-related crises. It promotes effective crisis management, accountability and transparency by designating Australian Government Coordinating Agency (AGCA) crisis management functions, key decision-makers, information and data flow arrangements and crisis coordination mechanisms and capabilities in the event of a domestic security crisis.

4.2. Scope

AUSSECPLAN applies to incidents of:

- violent civil unrest that does not meet the threshold for terrorism;
- foreign interference² that may or may not occur alongside other incidents;
- sabotage³ and malicious damage or impact to critical infrastructure (regardless of the origins of the actor); and/or
- espionage⁴ that may or may not occur alongside other incidents.

Incidents within this scope do not immediately activate AUSSECPLAN crisis coordination arrangements. For activation considerations, refer to **section 5.2**.

Response to a domestic security-related crisis may include provision of Australian Government non-financial assistance to Australian states and territories, which will be actioned under the Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN). The activation of AUSSECPLAN may occur concurrently with the activation of other national plans and protective security response arrangements, and is not intended to supersede or duplicate those arrangements.

AUSSECPLAN applies to incidents within Australia, including states and territories, and the external territories of: Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Australian Antarctic Territory, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Coral Sea Islands, Heard and McDonald Islands and Norfolk Island. Where the domestic security-related crisis is affecting an Australian external territory, Home Affairs will work with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, (or the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for the Australian Antarctic Territory, Heard Island or McDonald Islands) to execute crisis coordination activities.

¹ Under AUSSECPLAN, an Australian Government response is considered to be a response requiring the assistance of more than one agency, outside of business as usual arrangements.

² An act of foreign interference has the same meaning as Division 92 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

³ An act of sabotage has the same meaning as Division 82 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

⁴ An act of espionage has the same meaning as Division 91 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

4.3. Out of Scope

AUSSECPLAN does not alter the arrangements of state or territory governments in the exercising of their jurisdictional security-related crisis management responsibilities and arrangements. State and territory governments retain primary responsibility for the coordination, operational response and recovery from a domestic security crisis within their jurisdiction.

AUSSECPLAN does not apply to terrorism, cyber crises, incidents related to transport, telecommunications, or energy supply or availability, which are covered by separate national plans under the AGCMF.

Additionally, civil maritime security-related incidents that occur within the Australian Security Forces Authority Area (the offshore area commencing from the territorial sea baseline to the extremities of the Search and Rescue Zone) are out of scope. They would be managed under the Australian Government Piracy, Robbery and Violence at Sea Response Plan and/or the Australian Government Maritime Counter-Terrorism Response Plan.

Where it is unclear or unknown if a crisis is domestic security-related, and if the event is not otherwise covered by another national plan, the crisis will be determined to be "novel or ambiguous" and crisis coordination will be led by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Minister responsible for Emergency Management, as established by the AGCMF. Where there are concurrent events (including multiple hazards) with converging consequences and priorities, Home Affairs will work with NEMA and PM&C to identify an appropriate AGCA, taking into account the realised or likely impacts and consequences of the hazard(s) and required Australian Government capabilities.

4.4. Principles

AUSSECPLAN is underpinned by the following best practice principles to assist decision-makers to navigate priorities in time-limited and challenging situations. Therefore, a principles-based approach should be adopted, including:

1. **Jurisdictional primacy.** Empowering impacted jurisdictions by providing Commonwealth assistance while allowing jurisdictions to retain primacy of incident response.
2. **Unity of effort.** Encouraged through a collaborative and coordinated approach, without removing individual agencies' legislative, ministerial and constitutional responsibilities.
3. **Coordinated.** Coordination efforts will be centred on consequence management, including for consecutive, concurrent or compounding impacts.
4. **Flexible improvisation and scalability.** This will be promoted at a system level, given the complexity and severity of domestic security crises.
5. **Proportionate.** Resources mobilised will be reasonable and proportionate, ensuring all suitable community and civilian support is utilised prior to the mobilisation of last-resort aid.
6. **Decentralised decision-making.** Will be supported by centralised strategic coordination and decentralised execution.
7. **Responsive.** Being responsive and supporting elected officials' decision-making and crisis leadership.

Consideration of Diverse Groups

Under AUSSECPLAN, decisions and crisis communications made during the preparedness, response, and early recovery phases will consider the particular needs of people and communities who may be disproportionately at risk of harm and ensure their inclusion in planning. This may include, but is not limited to:

- people with a disability
- people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- First Nations communities
- refugee and migrant populations
- people experiencing or at risk of gender-based violence
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other non-binary, non-cisgender (LGBTQIA+) people
- culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

4.5. Overview of AUSSECPLAN Key Roles

Lead Minister

Minister for Home Affairs

Australian Government Coordinating Agency

Department of Home Affairs

Lead Coordinating Senior Official

Head of National Security

Sector Lead Agencies*

Australian Federal Police

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications,
Sport and the Arts

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Department of the Treasury

Enabling Agencies*

Australian Border Force

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

Attorney-General's Department

Department of Defence

National Emergency Management Agency

Office of National Intelligence

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

** Depending on the nature and subsequent consequences of a crisis that might fall under the scope of this plan, there could be additional Sector Lead and Enabling agencies.*

Note: This overview is provided for quick reference only. Detailed roles and responsibilities can be found in **section 6**.

5. Activation and Phase Changes

5.1. Overview

AUSSECPLAN has three (3) phases: STANDBY, ALERT and ACTIVE. The Lead Coordinating Senior Official has the authority to initiate phase changes under AUSSECPLAN.

The Lead Coordinating Senior Official will authorise a phase change from STANDBY to ALERT or ACTIVE if a domestic security-related crisis is imminent or has occurred. Home Affairs will advise relevant Australian Government agencies and jurisdictions of phase changes to AUSSECPLAN as required.

Note: The Lead Coordinating Senior Official retains the discretion to withhold sensitive, classified or otherwise controlled information relating to a phase change, or to restrict access to information about the incident and any resulting phase change, where the situation is sensitive or classified in nature.

5.2. Considerations for Activation of AUSSECPLAN

A decision to activate AUSSECPLAN, or authorise a phase change, is at the discretion of the Lead Coordinating Senior Official and may be undertaken in consultation with the Minister for Home Affairs (the Minister), Secretary of Home Affairs and other agencies as required, including NEMA and PM&C.

A domestic security incident may require crisis coordination under AUSSECPLAN if:

1. The incident is in scope (see **section 4.2**); and
2. There are significant, mass or widespread threats to, or realised impacts to, Australia's domestic or national security, or civil society's ability to continue to function; and
3. It is determined, at the Australian Government's discretion, that the response (or aspects of the response) requires Australian Government coordination; and
4. The incident is not better coordinated or responded to by another national plan under the AGCMF, or other Australian Government crisis arrangement.

The Lead Coordinating Senior Official may also, at their discretion and in consultation with the Minister and other agencies as appropriate, activate AUSSECPLAN or authorise a phase change in response to a domestic security-related incident that is not set out in **section 4.2**.

5.3. Phases and Activities

AUSSECPLAN consists of three (3) phases:

- STANDBY
- ALERT
- ACTIVE

STANDBY

AUSSECPLAN is maintained in STANDBY phase as the default condition. Under STANDBY, Home Affairs will:

- Monitor and maintain situational awareness.
- Conduct workforce planning to ensure that Home Affairs is equipped to successfully lead and coordinate a response effort under AUSSECPLAN.
- Training, education and exercising on the use and purpose of AUSSECPLAN.
- Maintain and review AUSSECPLAN as necessary.

ALERT

ALERT phase may be declared when:

- a credible (specific or general) and significant domestic security-related threat or incident is identified which may require Australian Government crisis coordination; and/or
- at least one other national plan under the AGCMF is activated which may have domestic security-related consequences.

The ALERT phase is characterised by the active and heightened monitoring of domestic security-related issues to determine whether escalation to the ACTIVE phase is required.

Once declared, Home Affairs will work across the Home Affairs portfolio to support required crisis response activities.

Under ALERT, Home Affairs will:

- Ensure situational awareness for relevant government officials by providing notification of events and updates to the National Situation Room (NSR) and the Global Watch Office (GWO) as required.
- Consider appropriate preparations and positioning of people and resources for possible incident escalation, including:
 - deploying, or coordinating deployment of, Home Affairs Liaison Officers (HALO) to the NSR; and
 - standing up an extended-hours roster of staff to support the response.
- Support the Lead Coordinating Senior Official in making decisions and recommendations on the level of coordination and response required.
- Support the Lead Coordinating Senior Official to brief the Minister and provide any support required to enable the Minister to exercise their responsibilities.
- Support the Minister to brief the Government or Cabinet Committee as required.
- Provide support for the briefing of other relevant Australian Government ministers on the crisis situation as it unfolds, if required.
- Consider utilising existing networks and committees to obtain additional situational awareness from government, industry and sector partners (including, but not limited to, the Trusted Information Sharing Network, the University Foreign Interference Taskforce or the Technology Foreign Interference Taskforce).
- Engage with state and territory counterparts if required. Home Affairs Community Liaison Officers (CLO) may support this.
- Consider thresholds and triggers that may indicate the requirement to convene a National Coordination Mechanism (NCM).
- In consultation with NEMA, convene and support the delivery of an NCM or Australian Government NCM (NCM-AUSGOV) as required.
- Develop whole-of-government crisis communications strategy and media messaging as required.
- Maintain business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis.
- Transfer any ongoing responsibilities and processes as crisis coordination concludes.
- Maintain records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.
- In consultation with PM&C, NEMA and other relevant agencies, consider convening an NCM-AUSGOV or other coordination mechanism to discuss the utility of declaring a National Emergency under the *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020* (NED Act) (see **section 7.2**).

Under ALERT, Sector Lead and Enabling Agencies will (at a minimum):

- Contribute to situational awareness, briefings and communications material to support Home Affairs coordination (as required).
 - Agencies with 24/7 watch keeping functions or emergency/crisis response obligations should be prepared to share any updates or information received during their normal course of business with the Lead Coordinating Senior Official and NCM, as required.
- Provide situational awareness and advice to their respective senior executives and ministers, as required.
- Consider appropriate preparations and positioning of people and resources for possible escalation.
- Engage networks and committees to help assess potential impacts and analysis, and obtain additional situational awareness from industry and sector partners to be shared with Home Affairs, as required.
- Participate in and support the delivery of an NCM or NCM-AUSGOV, as required.
- Maintain business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis.
- Maintain records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.

ACTIVE

Where an event is imminent, or has occurred, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official or delegate can activate AUSSECPLAN.

Once activated, Home Affairs will work across the Home Affairs portfolio to support required crisis response activities.

Under ACTIVE, Home Affairs will:

- Advise stakeholders via email that AUSSECPLAN has been activated.
- If not done already, deploy a HALO to the NSR and activate an extended hours roster.
- Ensure situational awareness for officials by providing notification of events, situation reports and updates to the NSR.
- Support the Lead Coordinating Senior Official to make decisions and recommendations on activities required for coordination and response.
- Support the Lead Coordinating Senior Official to brief the Minister, and provide any support required to enable the Minister to exercise their responsibilities, including maintaining a clear line of communication with the Minister's office.
- Support the briefing of other relevant Australian Government ministers on the crisis situation as it unfolds, if required.
- Engage and collaborate with counterparts in Sector Lead Agencies and Enabling Agencies to ensure the requirements under AUSSECPLAN are being met.
- Engage existing networks and committees to obtain additional information from government, industry and sector partners if relevant (including but not limited to the Trusted Information Sharing Network, the University Foreign Interference Taskforce or the Technology Foreign Interference Taskforce).
- Engage with state and territory counterparts, and Home Affairs CLOs.
- In consultation with DCG EMR, convene an NCM and/or NCM-AUSGOV to provide situational awareness and coordinate response efforts.
 - Lead Coordinating Senior Official to chair or co-chair an NCM and/or NCM-AUSGOV with DCG EMR.
- Develop and implement whole-of-government crisis communications strategy and media messages.
- Maintain business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis.

- Transfer any ongoing responsibilities and processes as crisis coordination concludes.
- Maintain records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.
- Conduct post-response evaluation, regular exercising and support integration of relevant lessons.
- In consultation with PM&C, NEMA and other relevant agencies, consider convening an NCM-AUSGOV or other coordination mechanism to discuss the utility of declaring a National Emergency under the NED Act (see **section 7.2**).

Under ACTIVE, Sector Lead and Enabling Agencies will (at a minimum):

- Contribute to situational awareness, briefings and communications material to support Home Affairs coordination (as required).
 - Agencies with 24/7 watch keeping functions or emergency/crisis response obligations should be prepared to share any updates or information received, during their normal course of business, with the Lead Coordinating Senior Official and NCM as required.
- Provide regular advice to their respective senior executive, ministers and the NCM, as required.
- Consider appropriate preparations and positioning of people and resources for possible escalation.
- Engage relevant networks and committees, including with relevant states and territories, to obtain additional situational awareness from industry and sector partners to be shared with Home Affairs.
- If requested by Home Affairs, deploy a Liaison Officer (LO) to support Home Affairs' coordination.
- Participate in, and support the delivery of, NCMs or NCM-AUSGOVs, as required.
- Maintain business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis.
- Maintain records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Under AUSSECPLAN, ministers, senior officials and agencies have clear responsibilities to ensure Australian Government coordination and response activities are well-aligned and responsive as the impacts and consequences of the crisis evolve.

It is important to recognise that the AGCA may be managing a domestic security crisis related only to AUSSECPLAN, and/or undertaking Australian Government coordination during concurrent crises with converging consequences and priorities. Where there are concurrent events, including multiple hazards with converging consequences and priorities, PM&C will work with NEMA and relevant Australian Government agency officials to determine whether it is appropriate to combine coordination efforts and the appropriate lead based on the portfolio with the most significant impacts. In those circumstances, the role of AGCA may not be held by Home Affairs. This does not displace the portfolio-specific responsibilities for the Minister for Home Affairs, Home Affairs and the Head of National Security as set out in this plan.

The Lead Minister, the AGCA, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official, Sector Lead Agencies and Enabling Agencies under AUSSECPLAN are outlined below.

6.1. Lead Minister

Under the AGCMF, the **Lead Minister** under AUSSECPLAN is the Minister for Home Affairs.⁵ The Minister is responsible for:

⁵ As established by the AGCMF, the Prime Minister may choose to appoint another Minister, including the Prime Minister, to act as the Lead Minister. Further, should a crisis require Tier 4 coordination, the Prime Minister will become the Lead Minister (unless delegated).

- Overseeing a coordinated Australian Government response to a domestic security-related crisis and coordinating ministerial activities by collaborating with other Australian, state and territory counterparts.
- Providing advice to the Prime Minister and the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) (or other committee of Cabinet) on whole-of-government crisis priorities and consequence management objectives during a domestic security-related crisis.
- Exercising their executive responsibilities and decision-making in consultation with Australian Government ministers with relevant interests, including considering exercising of legislative levers to support crisis management.
- Acting as the key Australian Government spokesperson in alignment with a whole-of-Australian Government crisis communications strategy.
- Ensuring that their office maintains business continuity plans in the event their office is affected directly by the crisis.
 - This includes ensuring there are systems and procedures in place so they are readily contactable.

6.2. Australian Government Coordinating Agency

The **Australian Government Coordinating Agency** for AUSSECPLAN is the Department of Home Affairs. Home Affairs is responsible for:

- Maintaining AUSSECPLAN.
- Monitoring domestic security-related events that may require Australian Government coordination, supported by Enabling Agencies.
 - In collaboration with other agencies, maintaining near real-time situational awareness and monitoring impacts and consequences of evolving crises across all sectors.
- Supporting the Lead Coordinating Senior Official in making decisions and recommendations on the level of coordination and response required.
- Supporting the Lead Coordinating Senior Official to brief the Minister and provide any support required to enable the Minister to exercise their responsibilities.
- Harnessing capabilities and resources from within the Home Affairs portfolio and from other agencies when portfolio-managed options are insufficient.
- Leading the whole-of-government crisis communication strategy and ensuring the development and dissemination of briefing products and public information materials (such as holding lines and whole-of-government talking points).
 - Deploying HALO(s) to the NSR or other operations centres as required to support situational awareness.
 - Coordinating and disseminating information and updates to relevant agencies to support briefing of their ministers to carry out their functions to respond to the crisis.
- Engaging with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions, and coordinating with responsible agencies.
- Maintaining records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.
- Supporting the transfer of any continuing functions and responsibilities to relevant officials and agencies (including state and territory leads) and recovery coordination mechanisms as crisis coordination concludes.
- Conducting post-response evaluation and supporting the integration of relevant lessons identified into the continuous improvement of the Australian Government's crisis management arrangements, including plans and capabilities.
- Exercising AUSSECPLAN in collaboration with NEMA and PM&C.

- Maintaining business continuity plans to ensure Home Affairs continues to perform its role if it is affected directly by a domestic security-related crisis.
- Executing relevant consequence management activities within its remit under the AGCMF.

As the nature of a domestic security crisis changes over time, the Australian Government may shift and adapt coordination arrangements in accordance with the severity and complexity of the crisis. Some incidents initially coordinated under the National Counter Terrorism Plan may be transitioned for coordination under AUSSECPLAN as the nature of the incident evolves outside of the scope of terrorism. A crisis managed under this plan may be subsequently determined to be an act of terrorism. This transition is an internal Home Affairs arrangement and any change in key contacts will be communicated with impacted agencies in a timely manner.

With mutual agreement of relevant agencies, agreement at a senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism, or at the direction of PM&C, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official may transition the AGCA responsibilities to NEMA during a response requiring Tier 3 coordination under the AGCMF, where response requirements are beyond its coordination capacity or capability. If a domestic security-related crisis is determined to be a Tier 4 crisis under the AGCMF, coordination will transfer to NEMA as the agency responsible for the whole-of-government coordination arrangements to facilitate response and early recovery.

6.3. Lead Coordinating Senior Official

The **Lead Coordinating Senior Official** for AUSSECPLAN is the Home Affairs Head of National Security, who is responsible for:

- Determining the activation or phase changes of AUSSECPLAN (STANDBY, ALERT, ACTIVE).
- Advising and supporting the Lead Minister in executing the Lead Minister's responsibilities.
 - Where the Lead Minister is the Prime Minister, advising and supporting the Prime Minister through PM&C.
- Assessing the level of crisis coordination required, including establishing, reviewing and adapting the appropriate tier of coordination over the course of the crisis.
- Overseeing the collection and dissemination of situational awareness information across the Australian Government and nationally.
- Co-chairing the NCM and NCM-AUSGOV.
 - Regularly asking NEMA to convene and co-chair (if required) NCM-AUSGOVs and NCMs during the crisis in collaboration with the DCG EMR.
 - Facilitating agreement to whole-of-government coordination priorities and objectives.
 - Ensuring coordination of cross-government advice to relevant ministers.
- Briefing the Minister to present a Cabinet Submission to NSC (or other Committee of Cabinet) in line with the requirements set out in the Cabinet Handbook.
- Engaging and collaborating with counterparts in Sector Lead Agencies and Enabling Agencies to ensure the requirements under AUSSECPLAN are being met.
- Maintaining clear lines of communication with the Lead Minister's office.
- Overseeing the crisis management responsibilities of Home Affairs under AUSSECPLAN, including:
 - Coordinating a whole-of-government crisis communications strategy.
 - Ensuring transfer of any ongoing responsibilities and processes as crisis coordination concludes.
 - Engaging with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions.
 - Conducting post-response evaluation, regular exercising and supporting integration of relevant lessons.
 - Relevant consequence management.

- Maintaining oversight of any requests for, or offers of, assistance received by Australian Government agencies from state, territory or foreign governments, in coordination with responsible agencies, including DFAT and NEMA.
- Maintains near real time situational awareness and monitors impacts and consequences of the crisis across all sectors, including awareness of Australian Government agencies' capacity to coordinate response efforts.

Should the Head of National Security be unavailable during a domestic security-related crisis, an alternative Lead Coordinating Senior Official will be nominated by the Secretary of Home Affairs.

6.4. Sector Lead Agencies

Domestic security is an expansive domain, with a number of Australian Government agencies having policy and operational roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, there are a range of Sector Lead Agencies responsible for monitoring domestic security-related crisis events and coordinating specific responses and consequence management activities within their sector. Under AUSSECPLAN, Sector Lead Agencies are responsible for:

- Monitoring crisis events that may impact the agency's interests and responsibilities.
- Conducting sector-specific responses and consequence management activities within their own portfolio, including coordination across jurisdictional equities as required.
- Deploying LOs to the NSR and the AGCA as required to support shared situational awareness.
- Proactively contributing to the whole-of-Government crisis communications strategy, dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole-of-Australian Government talking points and briefing materials).
- Engaging with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions.
- Maintaining business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis.
- Maintaining records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.

Sector Lead Agencies involved in supporting the near-term preparedness, response and early recovery under AUSSECPLAN are outlined below.

The list is intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive. Other Australian Government agencies may have responsibilities as a Sector Lead Agency under AUSSECPLAN, depending on the consequences of the domestic security incident.

Sector Lead Agency	Capability
Australian Federal Police	In its capacity as a criminal law enforcement agency, the AFP may coordinate and manage aspects of the operational response to the domestic security-related crisis. In collaboration with the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, AFP may also disseminate intelligence and information relevant to the domestic security-related crisis.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	Responsible for the response to impacts on electricity, gas and liquid fuel supplies in circumstances where the domestic security-related crisis has extended to these sectors.
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Supports the collection of offers of international assistance into Australia and supports international engagement with foreign jurisdictions to support a response to a domestic-security related crisis.

Sector Lead Agency	Capability
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts	Works with Home Affairs to coordinate crisis response should the domestic security-related crisis occur in an Australian External Territory, and provides advice on communications and transport related matters.
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	Responsible for monitoring and managing critical supply chain vulnerabilities and advising the Australian Government on supply chain risks and potential actions to improve resilience.
Department of the Treasury	Maintains the stability of the financial system to enable a functioning payment system and the ability for the government, businesses and individuals to pay, save, borrow, invest and carry out their transactions. Supports financial regulators to test risk controls and tolerance levels of resilience in financial regulations.

6.5. Enabling Agencies

Enabling Agencies have an important operational role in the Australian Government response to domestic security-related crises, including the administration of relevant programs, provision of specialist technical, scientific, intelligence or information capabilities, service delivery and the execution of other enabling activities to support effective crisis response and consequence management.

Under AUSSECPLAN, Enabling Agencies are responsible for:

- Providing regular updates to Home Affairs and relevant jurisdictions.
- Administering relevant programs.
- Providing specialist technical, scientific, intelligence or information capabilities.
- Supporting or conducting any other enabling activities, including service delivery, to support consequence management activities.
- Deploying LOs to the NSR as required to support shared situational awareness.
- Proactively contributing to the whole-of-Government crisis communications strategy, dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole-of-Australian Government talking points and briefing materials).
- Engaging with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions, as required, in coordination with Home Affairs.

For the purposes of AUSSECPLAN, the key agencies involved in enabling effective coordination, preparedness, response, and early recovery for domestic security-related crises include the following:

Enabling Agency	Capability
Australian Border Force	Operates the 24/7 Australian Border Operations Centre (ABOC) and Australian Maritime Border Operations Centre (AMBOC). ABOC is a centralised and unified operations centre, providing a single source of situational awareness on ABF operations. AMBOC is responsible for the tactical tasking and movement of aerial surveillance aircraft and surface response assets in response to civil maritime threats.

Enabling Agency	Capability
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation	Protects Australia and Australians from threats to their security by understanding the security environment and identifying security threats, hardening the environment against future threats and working with partners to disrupt threats and reduce harm. ASIO communicates and advises to inform operational action, government decision-making, policy development and community resilience.
Attorney-General's Department	<p>Supports the Attorney-General during a crisis to provide legal advice to the Australian Government as the First Law Officer, and advises the Attorney-General as one of the three authorising Ministers for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to be called out by the Governor-General.</p> <p>Administers the <i>Criminal Code Act 1995</i>, which contains criminal offences for sabotage, espionage and foreign interference conduct.</p>
Department of Defence	ADF personnel may be called out by the Australian Government to conduct security or protective security tasks in support of Commonwealth, state or territory police services in the event of a significant incident that is beyond the capacity of the relevant jurisdiction. Domestic security tasks in support of law enforcement requires the Australian Government to specifically authorise certain powers under the Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority arrangements. The National Defence Strategy states the Government's intention that the ADF is only used as a force of last resort for crisis response and recovery.
National Emergency Management Agency	Custodian of the Australian Government crisis capabilities that support some elements of crisis coordination including establishing an Australian Government Crisis Coordination Team. NEMA may convene NCMs and/or NCM-AUSGOV on request, and the DCG EMR (or delegate) may co-chair the NCM in partnership with Home Affairs. NEMA will also support whole-of-government situational awareness through the NSR and the Australian Government National Joint Common Operating Picture (NJCOP). Upon ACTIVATION of AUSSECPLAN, NEMA will become the AGCA should the domestic security-related crisis escalate to a Tier 4 crisis (or Tier 3, subject to consultation and agreement with relevant agencies) under the AGCMF.
Office of National Intelligence	Coordinates National Intelligence Community crisis-related support as required. The Director-General of National Intelligence, the Prime Minister's principal adviser on intelligence matters, also provides intelligence-derived context to inform senior decision-making during crises with national security, international or strategic implications or connections.
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	With support from Home Affairs and the Lead Coordinating Senior Official, advises and supports the Prime Minister during domestic security-related crises (including providing advice on key decision points, recommending to declare a National Emergency under the NED Act and convening a Committee of Cabinet or National Cabinet).

Other Australian Government agencies may have equities or responsibilities as an Enabling Agency under AUSSECPLAN and the list above is intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive (by way of example, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency may play a role in a domestic security-related incident that involves the security of radiological sources).

7. Operational Activities

7.1. Categorisation of Coordination Response

As the nature of a crisis changes over time, the Australian Government may shift and adapt coordination arrangements in accordance with the severity and complexity of the crisis.

<p><u>Tier 1: Coordination for Incident(s)</u> Limited impact / low capacity</p>	<p>May benefit from Home Affairs support</p> <p>Domestic security coordination at Tier 1 may require coordinated consequence management and response, but not national or extensive multi-jurisdictional engagement. The coordination for these incidents are typically led by the impacted jurisdiction, local law enforcement or a sector lead from an Australian Government agency, or a state or territory government.</p> <p>The Lead Coordinating Senior Official and Home Affairs may become involved if it is determined there is benefit from a degree of coordination or initial support at an Australian Government level. Incidents occurring within a particular state or territory should continue to follow jurisdictional arrangements (if relevant), with the understanding that Home Affairs can provide support by coordinating across the Australian Government, as required. This may not require additional activities for Home Affairs beyond business as usual.</p> <p>Home Affairs will continue to maintain situational awareness and monitor events, engaging with relevant stakeholders such as states and territories, as required.</p> <p>Coordination mechanisms at Tier 1 may include departmental committees, the University Foreign Interference Taskforce, Technology Foreign Interference Taskforce, or other ad hoc Australian Government-led forums. An NCM or NCM-AUSGOV may be convened.</p>
<p><u>Tier 2: Coordination for Significant Incident(s)</u> Major impact / moderate complexity</p>	<p>May require Home Affairs leadership and coordination</p> <p>Significant incidents require Home Affairs to take a leading coordination and consequence management role where there are meaningful benefits to a coordinated approach at the Australian Government level. The incident may have impacts across more than one jurisdiction and there are credible or actual threats to national security or civil society’s ability to continue to function.</p> <p>Support provided from the Australian Government is delivered in consultation with the impacted jurisdiction, relevant Australian Government agencies and state and territory governments.</p> <p>Coordination mechanisms at Tier 2 may include departmental committees and NCM and NCM-AUSGOV meetings. Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force (IDETF) meetings may provide important information to inform domestic responses to an international crisis.</p>

<p><u>Tier 3: Coordination for Nationally Significant Incident(s)</u> Severe impact / high complexity</p>	<p>Requires Ministerial or Home Affairs leadership and coordination</p> <p>Nationally significant incidents require Home Affairs and the Lead Coordinating Senior Official to lead coordination and consequence management at the Australian Government level. The incident is likely to have widespread impacts on national security or civil society's ability to function and affect multiple jurisdictions.</p> <p>Home Affairs will support the Lead Coordinating Senior Official to exercise their responsibilities and active consequence management activities for the domestic security elements of the incident, such as co-chairing NCM meetings as required. The states and territories may request that an NCM is conducted for a specific purpose or issue.</p> <p>The Minister will provide ministerial leadership, guidance and decision-making regarding the Australian Government response.</p> <p>Coordination mechanisms at Tier 3 may include NCM and NCM-AUSGOV meetings, briefing the Minister to report to the NSC or another Cabinet Committee if requested by the Prime Minister, in addition to issue-specific inter-departmental committees as required. IDETF meetings may provide important information to inform domestic responses to an international crisis.</p>
<p><u>Tier 4: Coordination for Nationally Catastrophic Incident(s)</u> Extreme to catastrophic impact / extreme complexity</p>	<p>Requires Prime Ministerial leadership and NEMA coordination</p> <p>Nationally catastrophic incidents are likely to be highly complex, have wide-ranging significant harmful impacts and consequences across multiple jurisdictions. This kind of incident is anticipated to involve most or all Australian Government portfolios.</p> <p>The Minister, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official and Home Affairs will support the Prime Minister (or delegate) and NEMA to coordinate the crisis response and manage consequences relating to the domestic security elements of the incident, including co-chairing NCM meetings as required.</p> <p>Coordination mechanisms at Tier 4 may include NCM and NCM-AUSGOV meetings, briefing the Minister to report to the NSC or another Cabinet Committee if requested by the Prime Minister, in addition to issue-specific inter-departmental committees. IDETF meetings may provide important information to inform domestic responses to an international crisis. At Tier 4, the IDETF reports to the NCM.</p>

Tier 4 Coordination

Tier 4 coordination may be triggered by a domestic security-related event where the complexity and severity of impacts and consequences requires the highest level of coordination across the full span of Australian Government interests. If a domestic security-related crisis is determined to be requiring Tier 4 crisis coordination under the AGCMF as agreed by relevant agencies, including NEMA and PM&C, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official will transition AGCA responsibilities to the DCG EMR. NEMA will assume the role of AGCA. The Lead Minister role will also transition to the Prime Minister who may wish to delegate some, or all, responsibilities to another minister.

Home Affairs may seek for the transition of Australian Government coordination arrangements to NEMA where an incident escalates to a level of complexity where the domestic security element forms one part of the incident. This may be quantified by the increased role and responsibilities of other agencies in support of consequence management, superseding the need for Home Affairs to lead.

Home Affairs will work with NEMA to agree upon an efficient transfer of relevant documents, reports, communications, plans and resources. The Lead Coordinating Senior Official will maintain close and regular contact with NEMA to ensure an efficient and seamless transition of Lead Coordinating Senior Official responsibilities during this time.

The transition does not displace portfolio-specific responsibilities for responsible agencies and ministers as detailed in the AGCMF. Should a transition occur, Home Affairs will become a Sector Lead Agency and will continue to perform its existing executive responsibilities as detailed in the AGCMF and AUSSECPLAN, which remains active. NEMA, as the new AGCA, will support all Sector Lead Agencies to fulfil their responsibilities as part of NEMA's whole-of-Australian Government coordination remit.

Deactivation and Post-Incident

Where there is no further requirement for Australian Government assistance, coordination and communications, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official or delegate will approve the phase change of AUSSECPLAN from ACTIVE or ALERT to STANDBY.

Home Affairs will advise relevant stakeholders of the AUSSECPLAN phase change. Home Affairs crisis coordination activities will cease and revert to business as usual. The post-crisis phase will be characterised by Home Affairs completing post action assessments and reports through leading an end-to-end assessment of the response. Home Affairs will conduct a post-incident review,⁶ and provide a report to relevant senior executives and the Minister as required. The outcomes of this review will inform future updates to AUSSECPLAN.

Recovery

Where AUSSECPLAN is activated as the primary plan for coordinating the Australian Government response to a domestic security incident, Home Affairs is responsible for coordinating early recovery activities. AUSSECPLAN may remain activated (either ACTIVE or ALERT) during this time, at the discretion of the Lead Coordinating Senior Official. This may include convening NCMs or using inter-departmental committees.

State and territory governments have responsibility for coordinating and planning recovery from domestic security-related incidents within their borders.

As the response to a protracted or severe-to-catastrophic crisis transitions to recovery, temporary or special mechanisms may be required to continue coordination of Australian Government efforts across longer-term recovery programs. These will be established as required.

7.2. Agency Crisis Governance and Coordination Arrangements

Home Affairs (as the lead portfolio department responsible for national and domestic security) maintains a range of capabilities to respond to domestic security-related crises. Capabilities which may be utilised for crisis coordination under AUSSECPLAN include:

- **The Counter Foreign Interference Coordination Centre** – is responsible for crisis coordination, as well as consequence management activities related to foreign interference threats. It will also manage Home Affairs' crisis coordination for domestic security-related crises pertaining to foreign interference and/or espionage.
- **The Resilience and Protective Security Division** – maintains policy responsibility for a range of domestic security-related areas, including protective security, emergency management and national civil preparedness. The Protective Security Coordination Centre maintains the whole-of-Government coordination responsibility for protective security for parliamentarians and Australian High Office Holders. The Commonwealth Security Policy Branch performs a whole-of-Government policy and regulatory function for Government cyber and protective security, including administration of the Protective Security

⁶ The AGCMF requires that within 12 months of a significant domestic security crisis prompting Tier 3 or 4 crisis coordination, the AGCA (Home Affairs or NEMA) must conduct a whole-of-Australian Government evaluation. For domestic security crises requiring Tier 1 or 2 coordination, Home Affairs will endeavour to conduct a similar internal review within 12 months.

Policy Framework and Hosting Certification Framework. The National Resilience Branch works to build Australia's national resilience and enable Australia to prevent, absorb, adapt, and evolve from both human-induced and natural crises.

- **The Counter Terrorism Coordination Centre** – maintains a sophisticated crisis response capability which may be drawn upon for crisis response and coordination in a domestic security-related crisis where there is a terrorism nexus.
- **The Critical Infrastructure Security Centre** – drives an all-hazards critical infrastructure regime in partnership with governments, industry and the broader community, and supports critical infrastructure asset owners and operators to prepare for, and respond to, hazards that may prejudice Australia's national interests or the continued delivery of essential goods and services. It also administers the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018*.

As a portfolio agency, Home Affairs may also leverage NEMA's capabilities, as required, for the maintenance of situational awareness through the NSR and NJCOP. NEMA's Crisis Intelligence, Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning capabilities, and through the Australian Government Joint Crisis Coordination Team, may also provide decision support relating to overlapping consequences that emerge from hazards for which NEMA is lead or when declared as Tier 4 and NEMA is AGCA.

National Coordination Mechanism

The NCM is the peak senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism for shared situational awareness, national coordination and synchronisation of efforts under AUSSECPLAN. It brings together relevant Australian, state, territory and local government officials, industry, peak bodies, not-for-profit organisations and eminent individuals for coordination, communication and collaboration during near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery.

During a domestic security crisis, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official co-chairs the NCM, supported by NEMA.

Declaring a National Emergency

In the event of a significant domestic security incident that has caused, is causing or is likely to cause nationally significant harm,⁷ an NCM-AUSGOV, or appropriate coordination mechanism, may be called to consider whether the incident has reached the thresholds for advising the declaration of a National Emergency under the NED Act. The Governor-General may declare a National Emergency, on the advice of the Prime Minister, which enlivens a number of emergency powers for Australian Government ministers and senior officials to support a domestic security crisis response.

While the NCM-AUSGOV can consider and make a recommendation to declare a National Emergency, jurisdictions impacted by a domestic security incident can also request a National Emergency be declared. Once a declaration has been made, NEMA supports the operationalisation of the National Emergency through the NCM and the NSR.

Crisis Communication and Public Information

To ensure consistent messaging across government during AUSSECPLAN activations, the Lead Coordinating Senior Official supported by Home Affairs is responsible for coordinating whole-of-Australian Government key messages and public communication.

The Media and Communications Branch within Home Affairs is responsible for supporting consistent public messaging under AUSSECPLAN. Agencies are responsible for providing timely and accurate information related to their responsibilities to support prompt updates and dissemination of crisis communication products.

⁷ See section 10 of the [National Emergency Declaration Act 2020](#) for the definition of 'nationally significant harm'.

The Media and Communications Branch is responsible for:

- Developing a whole-of-Government crisis communications strategy.
- Coordinating crisis communications key messages and products with relevant states and territories.
- Determining products, channels and cadence of updates.
- Confirming key spokespeople and tempo of engagement.
- Liaising with media and public information officers across government and other stakeholders, including media outlets, as required.
- Supporting the Lead Minister and their office on all crisis communications requirements.
- Anticipating and resolving communication risks, including misinformation and disinformation (in consultation with key line areas).
- Incorporating and prioritising coordinated and consistent key messages across government, including public safety messages.
- Adjusting communications as the event, the media cycle and community needs evolve.
- Disseminating crisis communication products across the Australian Government, state and territory governments, industry and other stakeholders, as required or deemed relevant.
- Supporting other areas of government that are organising media conferences.
- Supporting PM&C, the Prime Minister's Office and any other ministers on crisis communication requirements.

The Lead Coordinating Senior Official will ensure any information is shared and communicated in line with the Protective Security Policy Framework. Where classified information sharing is required, including at SECRET and TOP SECRET, Home Affairs will work with NEMA as co-chairs of the NCM, and other agencies, as required, to ensure secure communication capabilities.

Resourcing and Surging

Domestic security-related crises of a significant scale, complexity or protracted duration could erode Home Affairs' capacity to respond to those crises under AUSSECPLAN, while concurrently maintaining critical business operations. When internal surge options are exhausted, Home Affairs will utilise appropriate surge workforce options across the Australian Public Service (APS) to augment its operational structures. These options may include the APS Surge Reserve maintained by the Australian Public Service Commission, which can mobilise staff in large numbers to respond to significant crises when required.

7.3. Liaison Officers

Prior to, or during, a domestic security-related crisis, Home Affairs may request LOs from other Australian Government agencies and/or jurisdictions to be deployed to the NSR or Home Affairs.

8. Requests for Assistance

8.1. Domestic

Domestic crises may require Australian Government resources to support the impacted jurisdiction. Home Affairs should maintain dialogue and contact with impacted jurisdictions to understand the needs and gaps of resourcing available to prepare for, respond to and recover from the domestic security crisis.

During an AUSSECPLAN activation, when the total resources (government, community and commercial) of an affected jurisdiction cannot reasonably cope with the needs of the situation, the nominated official can seek non-financial assistance from the Australian Government in accordance with COMDISPLAN. For further information, see [COMDISPLAN](#). Other national plans may also support the response.

Defence Assistance

A request for Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority (DFACA) involves the “call out” of the ADF to protect Commonwealth interests or states and territories against ‘domestic violence’⁸ as defined by the *Defence Act 1903*. Domestic security operations by the ADF can only be undertaken after the Australian Government has called out the ADF under DFACA arrangements.

In most instances, a request for DFACA outlining the ‘effects’ requested to be achieved (not specific Defence capabilities) is made by an authorised state or territory government official to the NSR. On receipt of the request, the NSR will coordinate with Defence’s Military Strategic Commitments (MSC) Division. MSC is responsible for briefing the Chief of the Defence Force and preparing submissions for ministerial consideration and, where required, Governor-General approval. MSC will inform the NSR if urgent requests that have bypassed the NSR process are received by Defence.

Separately, Defence can provide assistance to civilian agencies where there is no contemplated use of force through Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC). A request for DACC is to be made by an authorised state or territory government official to NEMA.

8.2. International

The processes for offers of international assistance, and coordinating the reception of international assistance, are covered under the arrangements in the enabling *Interim Australian Government Reception of International Assistance Plan* (AUSRIAPLAN). For further information, see [AUSRIAPLAN](#).

9. Reviewing AUSSECPLAN

The Head of National Security, as the document owner, will administratively review the AUSSECPLAN annually or at their discretion. The AUSSECPLAN will also be comprehensively reviewed at least once every three years in line with procedures established by the Crisis Arrangements Committee.

Recommendations for amendments or suggestions for improvement may be forwarded to:

Emergency Management Policy Section

National Resilience Branch, Resilience and Protective Security Division

Critical Infrastructure and Protective Security Group

Department of Home Affairs

domesticsecuritycrisis@homeaffairs.gov.au

⁸ See section 119 of the [Australian Constitution](#).

10. Associated Documents

AUSSECPLAN should be referred to in conjunction with the following documents:

Relevant Legislation

- *Australian Federal Police Act 1979*
- *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979*
- *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004*
- *Crimes Act 1914*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995*
- *Defence Act 1903*
- *Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003*
- *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020*
- *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018*
- *Social Security Act 1991*
- *Telecommunications Act 1997*

Related National Plans and/or Arrangements

- Australian Cyber Response Plan (AUSCYBERPLAN)
- Australian Government Crisis Management Framework
- Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN)
- Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework
- Australian Government Maritime Counter-Terrorism Response Plan (AUSMCTPLAN)
- Australian Government Piracy, Robbery and Violence at Sea Response Plan (AUSPRVSPLAN)
- Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) Policy and DACC Manual
- Defence Policy Guide: Threshold for Call Out of the Australian Defence Force
- Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA)
- Interim Australian Government Catastrophic Crisis Plan (Interim AUSCATPLAN)
- Interim Australian Government Reception of International Assistance Plan (Interim AUSRIAPLAN)
- Interim National Recovery Guidelines
- Major Aviation Security Incident Framework (MASI)
- National Counter-Terrorism Plan (NCTP)

Resources

- Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning (CASP) Guidebook
- Exercise in a Box
- Lessons in a Box