



ALTERNATIVE COMMONWEALTH CAPABILITIES FOR CRISIS RESPONSE DISCUSSION PAPER

ISRM AND AIES JOINT RESPONSE

September 2023

<https://nema.gov.au/stories/disaster-public-feedback>

The Institute of Strategic Risk Management (ISRM) was established to create a global centre where practitioners, academics and policy makers can come together to share information, help progress and promote the underlying understanding and capabilities associated with strategic risk and crisis management, and to develop their own personal and professional networks (<https://theisrm.org/en/about-us>).

The Australasian Institute of Emergency Services (AIES) is a membership organisation for emergency service and affiliate organisations. For more than 40 years, the Institute has acted as an independent forum where members can be heard, and their opinions shared. The AIES provides a voice for the Emergency Services, by speaking out on issues that affect its members and the community in general (<https://aies.net.au/>).

The Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper pertains to submissions on the capabilities that the Commonwealth Government needs to have to support state and territory-led crisis response and recovery efforts as an alternative to the Australian Defence Force (ADF), identifying that the ADF's assistance has, amongst other capabilities, included planning support, response and recovery.



THE ROLE OF DEFENCE FORCES



Australia is not alone in reviewing the role of its defence force in contributing to whole of Government responses beyond its primary role. The UK Government¹ and the RAND Corporation² have reviewed the role of defence forces in relation to climate change, the need for increased societal resilience, and a changing strategic outlook.

The Australian Defence Force has a range of equipment and provides a ready source of labour to support whole of government response to crisis and emergency events. A key ADF strength is the level of training personnel receive in strategic thinking and planning, that allow the ADF to support State Governments' planning in times of emergency and crisis. The ADF expends significant resources selecting, training, and educating its workforce. The ADF's professional military education and training (PMET) program not only trains personnel in specific roles but educates them to better understand the variety of contexts in which they need to operate and enable them to contribute to whole of government initiatives.

Central to the ADF planning capability is a well-developed planning doctrine. The Joint Military Appreciation Process (JMAP), and training underpin ADF planning capability. JMAP is integrated into both general and specific planning courses. Developing professional skills through a combination of formal training, education and experience prepares ADF personnel to apply planning skills not only to their core defence role, but also to a wider range of scenarios.

This joint ISRM-AIES response paper focuses on the following areas:

- 1 Addressing category error
- 2 Developing a cause agnostic approach to risk
- 3 Training and doctrine
- 4 Better resourcing 'the long tail' of recovery
- 5 Funding and staffing
- 6 Standard setting and support for community resilience.
- 7 Australian public expectation management
- 8 Proactive vs reactive approach

¹ Ministry of Defence (MoD). (2018). *Global strategic trends: The future starts today (6th ed.)*. Ministry of Defence UK.

² Caves, B., Lucas, R. Dewaele, L. Muravska, J., Wragg, C., Spence, T., Hernandez, Z., Knack, A. & Black, J. (2021). *Enhancing defence's contribution to Societal Resilience in the UK: Lessons from international approaches*. RAND Corporation.

Retter, L., Knack, A., Hernandez, Z., Harris, R. Caves, B., Robson, M. & Adger, N. (2021). *Crisis response in a changing climate: Implications of climate change for UK Defence logistics in humanitarian and disaster relief and military aid to the civil authorities' operations*. RAND Corporation. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA1024-1>

CATEGORY ERROR

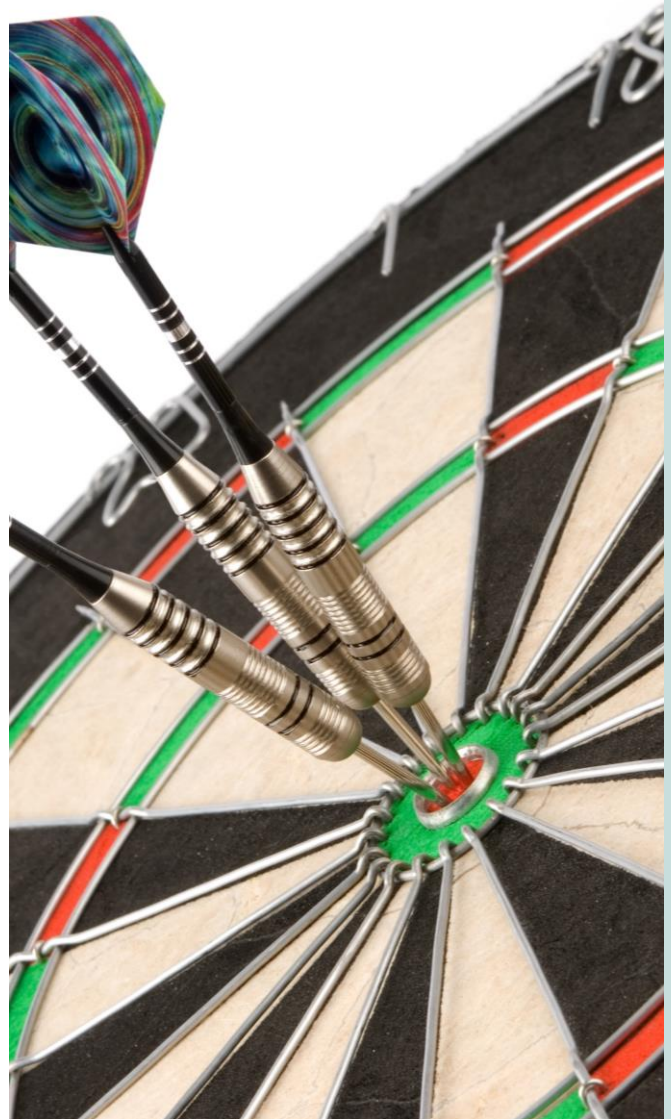
The Australian Government³ and the International Standard Organisation (ISO)⁴ define **crises** as extraordinary events, characterised by high levels of uncertainty and requiring adaptive responses. The ISO defines crises as being strategic in nature, requiring different response and recovery thinking and actions than those events that may be predicted, and for which communities have standing arrangements.

Conversely, **emergencies** (i.e. fires, storms, cyclones, and floods) can be predicted and prepared for to a large degree. Areas of flood risk are documented, fuel reduction is a well understood fire management practice, and the times of the year for which storm, cyclone and fire preparation are prudent practice are well known. States have dedicated agencies, with established and exercised plans, to respond to such emergencies.

Despite the doctrinal and functional difference between emergencies and crises, there is a tendency to apply familiar and established emergency management processes and plans to unfamiliar crises. For example, there is a propensity to apply incident management systems, that often lack the structure and the trained personnel to support strategic and consequential thinking⁵.

The Commonwealth Government's Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning (CASP) Guidebook articulates the requirement for different processes to respond to a crisis. Australia's emergency management doctrine typically does not make this distinction nor however does it recognise for the need to apply different tools under conditions of elevated uncertainty, where traditional forecasting and risk management techniques may not be applicable.

The education, training and skills required by those managing emergencies and crises differ. Developing appropriate training education and doctrine for crisis managers, provides the opportunity to build a crisis management capability and reduce reliance on the ADF. Broadly, developing and funding personnel in the private, public, and not for profit sectors to be able to support the government in managing a crisis, including both response and recovery, is one way of reducing the burden on the ADF. Organisations such as Disaster Relief Australia⁶ draw on the training, skills and experiences acquired through their service with the ADF but reduce the need to draw on the capabilities and resources of those currently serving in the ADF.



³ Australian Government *Crisis Management Framework* Version 3.2 November 2022

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/download/australian-government-crisis-management-framework.pdf>

⁴ ISO 22361:2022 *Security and resilience - Crisis Management - Guidelines* <https://www.iso.org/standard/50267.html>

⁵ Refer Figure 2 *Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning (CASP) Guidebook* <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/casp-guidebook.pdf>

⁶ <https://disasterreliefaus.org/>

Other well-known organisations such as the Boy Scouts⁷, Girl Guides⁸ and Royal Life Saving Society⁹ also provide emergency management training to some of their members. St John's Ambulance¹⁰ have trained and deploying members in an emergency. The Australian Government, through National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), could encourage and support better utilisation of these not-for-profit organisations drawing on their potential resources. There are resources, other than the ADF, that could potentially better support other Australians in times of crisis or emergencies. Engaging and coordinating those resources, and more, is well within NEMA's remit to do¹¹.

Australian states, territories, and local governments also need to be better placed to identify and more promptly respond to crises. Before the crisis or emergency, improved preparedness and risk mitigation can reduce the costs of response and recovery. This Discussion Paper emphasises resilience. We need to collectively find ways of nurturing resilience as the disasters keep occurring and as the climate changes. We need to be innovative and think outside the box rather than continuing to fall back onto the historic position of reliance on the ADF when disasters become unmanageable by local resources.

CAUSE-AGNOSTIC APPROACH TO RISK

The House of Lords report, *Preparing for Extreme Risks*, noted that “witnesses suggested that it would be more valuable for the National Security Risk Assessment to give more attention to the consequences of a disruptive event rather than to the cause”¹². In the same report Sir Oliver Letwin notes the value of being able to respond to a wide range of possible events, saying that the UK needs “the capacity to deal in a non-specific way not with the thing that is afflicting us but with the fallout from it—the consequences of it”¹³.

Although Australian emergency management doctrine has adopted an “all hazard” approach, that concept is not well defined or understood. An all-hazards approach may be defined as an “integrated approach that involves developing, broad, preparedness, decision-making, response, and recovery capabilities that can deal with a full spectrum of different disruption-related risk and disruptive conditions”¹⁴. Such an approach should not start with known hazards, yet this is the approach reflected in most emergency risk assessments.

Increasingly the cause of an event is less important than its aftermath. “To change course, new approaches are needed. This will require transformations in what governance systems value and how systemic risk is understood and addressed. Doing more of the same will not be enough”¹⁵. The UNDRR 2022 Global Assessment Report (GAR 2022)¹⁶ addresses the importance of identifying those assets (physical and social) a community most values, and then working backward to determine what may destroy or degrade those assets.

A benefit of a hazard-agnostic, consequence-informed approach, is that it requires careful articulation of the type of event which may lead to those assets which are most valued being destroyed or damaged. This in turn reduces the opportunity for the ‘biggest or loudest’ interests in the room to promote their hazard as the most significant.

The UK Government began publishing in 2008 its National Risk Register¹⁷. The Australian Government could do similarly. Investing in an Australian National Risk Register would provide a platform and leadership for better emergency preparedness with the Australian businesses and community more generally. Investing in better risk assessment and management would reduce reliance on the ADF, and reduce adverse outcomes following crises and emergencies. If you understand what you, your family, your community and Australia are facing, then you can enhance resilience as well as being better prepared to respond and recover, and with less reliance on the ADF to do so.

⁷ <https://scouts.com.au/>

⁸ <https://www.girlguides.org.au/>

⁹ <https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/>

¹⁰ <https://stjohn.org.au/>

¹¹ Our vision “Working through meaningful partnerships, we will build Australia's capacity for disaster resilience and support our communities when they need it most.” <https://nema.gov.au/index.php/about-us>

¹² Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning (2021) *Preparing for Extreme Risks: Building a Resilient Society* Report of Session 2021–22, House of Lords p 74

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/8082/documents/83124/default/>

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Standards Australia (2020) AS/NZS 5050 (Int):2020 *Managing disruption-related risk*, Standards Australia. The updated version of this standard is due for publication later in 2023

¹⁵ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2022) *Our World at Risk Transforming Governance for a Resilient Future*, <https://www.undrr.org/gar/gar2022-our-world-risk-gar#container-downloads>

¹⁶ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2022). *Global assessment report on disaster risk reduction, 2022: Our World at Risk: Transforming Governance for Resilient Future*. Geneva https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Risk_Register most recently published in August 2023

¹⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1175834/2023_NATIONAL_RISK_REGISTER_NRR.pdf

TRAINING AND DOCTRINE



Emergency responders are trained for their agency roles and to respond to the hazards for which their agency is responsible. There is, however, a doctrinal and practical difference between emergency response and emergency management. The ADF recognise this need, and has developed and continues to deliver the Professional Military Education and Training (PMET) program to train its decision makers and planners appropriately. There is currently no equivalent program for professional and volunteer emergency management education and training to better prepare emergency planners or managers in Australia. The United Kingdom (Emergency Planning College), Canada (Justice Institute of British Columbia) and the USA (Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Institute), have central emergency management education institutes. Since the closure of the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI), Mt Macedon, Victoria, in mid-2015, Australia has had no equivalent central emergency management education institute.

While CASP reflects a planning process like the Joint Military Appreciation Program (JMAP), Australian emergency management doctrine does not articulate or implement such an approach. Doctrine and training are closely linked. Doctrine should inform training and effective organisational learning process should ensure that there is a closed loop between doctrine and improvement based on experience gained in each crisis. However, doctrine needs to be forward looking, learning from the past for the future. Responsive doctrine requires that a capability be developed that allows doctrine to be changed as frequently as circumstances dictate, rather than being driven by predetermined review timelines.

The benefit of developing nationally consistent emergency management doctrine and training is that it enables more effective utilisation of resource capacity, available across all community sectors and jurisdictions. Significant emergency management capability exists in Critical Infrastructure Owners and Operators, NGOs, business, non-emergency service govt entities etc. Open sharing of doctrine and access to training for all capability providers, (not just emergency service organisations such as fire and SES) are key to achieving an integrated national dynamic resourcing capacity. In other countries such as New Zealand and the USA, there are many examples of utilisation of the capabilities and capacity of diverse organisations to support emergency response and recovery. In New Zealand, for example, response and recovery leadership training integrates public and private sector leaders in its courses. This helps to build interoperability and enables more effective resource utilisation.

The current National Resource Sharing Centre operated by the Australian Fire Authorities Council is constrained by its focus on emergency services. The reality is that emergency management is a whole of society issue requiring effective utilisation of resources and capabilities from all sectors. There needs to be a mechanism that can be applied across all sectors to enable efficient dynamic capacity utilisation. Such a mechanism would help develop skills in:

- ➔ Situational awareness
- ➔ Sense and meaning making.
- ➔ Cognitive bias and critical thinking
- ➔ Enhanced decision making
- ➔ Effective and directive communication skills
- ➔ Effective reflective and learning practices.



BETTER RESOURCING ‘THE LONG TAIL’ OF RECOVERY

Although the focus of this paper is on resilience, it also makes some references to recovery following crises and emergencies. Assistance from the ADF is much welcomed by those Australians most impacted by many emergencies. However, recovery is much more than hosing out flooded homes, and taking irrecoverable items to the footpath for local governments to arrange collection.

Future planning for emergencies impacting Australians needs to better appreciate and resource the challenges posed by the “long tail” of recovery for many. Too often, local governments and not for profit organisations have been left to deal with increased resource demands and expectations from their disaster-affected communities, with little or no additional funding to deliver coordinated, comprehensive, and not time-limited recovery services.

As important as the Disaster Ready Fund is¹⁸ (and those funds will be put to good use throughout Australia), the question remains: Who is allocated the Disaster Funding? Although the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA), between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments exist, it should be noted that:

- ➔ Responding to natural disasters, including the provision of relief and recovery assistance to disaster affected communities, is primarily the responsibility of state and territory governments.
- ➔ When the NDRRA is activated, the Australian Government may fund up to 75 per cent of the assistance available to individuals and communities¹⁹.

¹⁸ <https://nema.gov.au/disaster-ready-fund>

¹⁹ <https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/disaster-arrangements/natural-disaster-relief-and-recovery-arrangements>

The ADF has played a short-term role in supporting emergency recovery, but more robust arrangements to manage the long tail of recovery need to be considered and implemented to reduce the adverse outcomes for many Australians following disasters impacting them, their homes, businesses, communities, and Australia more generally. Investing in recovery brings people back into the productive economy sooner.

Australians, especially those living in disaster prone areas, are being 'priced out' of the insurance market, so Australian Governments and not-for-profit organisations will be dealing with an increasingly uninsured population, when disaster strikes.

FUNDING AND STAFFING

The major difficulty with the current proposal to withdraw the ADF from emergency management activities is that, until a parallel workforce is in place, the Australian population will be more vulnerable to adverse impacts of natural and man-made disasters.

Whatever the solution that is agreed between the Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Government, historic underfunding and cost shifting needs to be addressed. Globally and locally, many have ceased using the term, "climate change", but instead are accepting that the current context is the "climate has changed". During the recent Canadian fires, some emergency managers and others were noting that these 2023 fires were beyond adaptation. If such catastrophic conditions become the new normal or occur with greater frequency, and if the ADF has retreated from its involvement in emergencies, except in the 'most dire' circumstances, what are the alternatives? Who and how will responses be funded? What can be done to address the ageing of Australia's emergency service volunteer workforce? How can the lack of interest and availability of younger Australians to join the emergency services, especially as volunteers, be addressed? As we understand it, recruitment and retention of members is growing problem with the ADF too²⁰.

At the recent National Conference of Defence Reserves Association, it was noted that it was taking up to 12 months for interested prospects to be recruited. The CDF indicated that this had to change and foreshadowed revision of the reserve recruitment process.

STANDARD SETTING AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Standard setting by the Commonwealth Government to be maintained by State, Territory and Local Governments and support for community resilience

In the long term, the Commonwealth Government needs to continue to address future hazards with a comprehensive, risk driven, progressive approach to supporting emergency management, with such considering the people power, the training, and the skills required (including development of the skills and capabilities listed in point 3 of this paper). The best available equipment suitable for the future²¹ must support staff and volunteers while:

- capturing the knowledge, they have gained.
- educating, empowering and enabling them.
- accepting, and acting on Indigenous, other community and local knowledge, and
- integrating the predictive capacity that artificial intelligence (AI) offers in an ever-changing operational environment in preparing and responding to emergencies.

The Commonwealth needs to establish and monitor agreed quality standards with common operating procedures, platforms, training, and procurements. This will allow better support for rapid deployments across State and Territory borders, when required. As per the previous section

All levels of Australian Governments need to support and encourage community resilience to support communities for future crises that will impact them from time to time.

²⁰ At the recent National Conference of Defence Reserves Association, it was noted that it was taking up to 12 months for interested prospects to be recruited. The CDF indicated that this had to change and foreshadowed revision of the reserve recruitment process.

²¹ Such as the greater use of drones (unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV)) and robots in hazardous environments when time permits their deployment. <https://www.surflifesaving.com.au/about-us/australian-uav-service/>

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT

Given the clearly stated position that the ADF wishes to withdraw from assisting in emergencies²², how is this position to be conveyed to the Australian public? They have the expectation, built on years of experience, that the ADF will come to their aid in times of adversity. A public education campaign explaining the new arrangements for Australian emergency management would need to be funded and restated, on a regular basis, as the historic disaster season from October to March/April is breaking down due to a changed climate. In addition, engaging communities and gaining their support ahead of a disaster response makes the response more effective. This can also serve as a hearts and minds approach to shift the dial back to engaging the public as a crucial force multiplier specifically in proactive prevention.

PROACTIVE VS REACTIVE APPROACH

Historically emergency management has been viewed as primarily a response activity followed by a recovery activity. While there is much lip service given to the prevention and preparation aspects, these critical variables are arguably the most important for disaster reduction and long-term results²³. While a focus on resilience as an outcome is excellent an equal focus on proactive prevention and proactive preparation is not well understood nor accepted. A shift to applying a more cohesive approach that does not look at hazards and threats alone but also looks at opportunities to prevent and minimise damage and disruption, would yield significant long-term savings in almost all areas. In addition, an engaged set of critical stakeholders that are aligned pre-incident are more likely to perform cohesively and effectively when a response is required.

²² *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review 2023*
<https://www.defence.gov.au/about/reviews-inquiries/defence-strategic-review> p 109

²³ <https://www.theismr.org/en/the-move-towards-presiliencebr-dr-gavriel-schneider-tony-mcguirkbr>



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to reduce the need for ADF planning support emergency response and recovery in other than the most extreme circumstances:

- 1** Develop nationally consistent doctrine, reflective of the CASP, recognising the need for different management structure for crisis management and its connectivity with more standard and routine emergency events.
- 2** Develop national doctrine to support a consequence-based approach to risk at the operational and strategic level. The world is changing, and COVID-19 demonstrated that hazards that countries have least experience with may have the most substantial consequences.
- 3** Develop and resource nationally consistent crisis and emergency management planning doctrine, supported by training and exercising to develop planners to the capability level currently provided by the ADF.
- 4** Promote a national emergency management training culture that is inclusive and accessible to emergency managers from across society and develops a more human centric approach.
- 5** Develop a national capability to coordinate the utilisation of resource capacity embedded in all of society not just emergency service organisations.
- 6** Train for stakeholders to look at proactive prevention as a crucial risk management skill set and opportunity area.

Thank you for considering our joint submission. Representatives from both organisations are happy to further discuss.

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