

## ManpowerGroup submission to the Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the important and complex issues raised in the NEMA 'Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper' (Discussion Paper).

ManpowerGroup's contribution to the solutioning of the challenges outlined in the NEMA Discussion Paper is limited to our area of prowess and stems from our unparalleled subject matter expertise as the global leader in Managed Services Provision.

The ManpowerGroup response focusses on two critical areas;

- The requirement for a managed and maintained **Responder Talent Pool Database** to optimise:
  - Rapid Mobilisation
  - Matching Skills to Needs
  - Verification of Training and Qualifications
  - Blended Volunteer and Paid Workforce
  - Resource Allocation
  - Preparedness and Planning
  - Deployment Responsibility
- The requirement for a **Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner** to optimise;
  - Managed Services Provision
  - Wide Reach and Coverage
  - Interagency Coordination
  - Data Management
  - Legal and Regulatory Compliance
  - Onboarding and Ongoing Training Compliance
  - Long-Term Planning

Our dedication to assisting NEMA and its affiliated agencies in their mission to protect, defend, and aid the recovery of affected communities is resolute and we welcome the opportunity to expand on our recommendations and to discuss our vision as a trusted strategic partner in provisioning quality services to achieve these outcomes.

Regards



Glenn McPhee  
Chief Executive Officer ManpowerGroup  
Executive General Manager Talent Solutions

## **Responder Talent Pool Database for Disaster Response Deployment**

In a world that faces an increasing frequency of natural disasters, having a well-maintained and managed national database of suitably skilled and available human resources to form the backbone of a response workforce is an absolute necessity. Natural disasters, such as floods, bushfires, cyclones, and earthquakes can strike at any time, leaving communities devastated and in dire need of rapid response and relief efforts. This is where the importance of managing and maintaining a comprehensive National Responder Talent Pool database of available resources, including individual's name, contact details, qualifications, and training verification, comes into play. Equally essential is a mechanism to gain a reliable form of pre-commitment from this type of talent pool.

### **Rapid Mobilisation**

One of the most critical aspects of responding effectively to a natural disaster is the ability to mobilise resources quickly. Having a National Responder Talent Pool database of pre-committed and available talent pool allows the response coordinator to swiftly identify and contact individuals with the skills and qualifications needed for specific tasks. This saves valuable time, ensuring that assistance reaches affected areas promptly.

### **Matching Skills to Needs**

Every disaster scenario is unique, and the skills required for response can vary significantly. With a well-maintained database, response coordinators can efficiently match the skills and qualifications of available personnel to the specific needs of the disaster. For some disasters, this may be able to focus on a pre-committed workforce within a certain geographic proximity to the impacted Local Government Areas (LGA) – but for other, more widespread or higher impact disasters, the response may need to be coordinated across a national database. This ensures that the right people are deployed to handle tasks such as medical assistance, search and rescue operations, engineering, logistics, and more.

### **Verification of Training and Qualifications**

In the chaos of a disaster, it is crucial that the individuals deployed to assist are not only willing but also qualified for the role they are required to undertake, and their training credentials are up to date in order to mitigate the risk to the individual as much as the community. A comprehensive database allows for the verification of training and qualifications, inclusive of the currency of certifications, ensuring that responders have the necessary expertise to carry out their tasks effectively and safely. This helps maintain the quality and integrity of disaster response efforts.

### **Blended Volunteer and Paid Workforce**

As recognised by the NEMA Discussion Paper, “The volunteer, not-for-profit and charity sectors are crucial parts of Australia’s national response and recovery arrangements.” There is also a myriad of challenges, including a declining pool of volunteers, and the “potential ‘double counting’ of an emergency response workforce.” Indeed, the underlying premise of the Discussion Paper is that the Commonwealth Government “needs to have to support state and territory-led crisis response and recovery efforts as an alternative to the ADF.” The ADF of course, as well as being an extant force at the beck and call of government, is a paid workforce that can be relied upon to deploy when directed to do so. It is therefore highly likely that a national database to form the backbone of an alternative response workforce will need to rely on paid workers as well as volunteers,

### **Effective Communication**

Communication is the backbone of any disaster response operation. A well-managed and maintained National Responder Talent Pool database provides accurate contact information for available talent, making it easier to establish communication channels with responders and coordinate their deployment. Timely and clear communication is essential for ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that responders are kept informed of critical updates and instructions.

### **Resource Allocation and Optimisation**

Limited resources, such as supplies, equipment, and personnel, must be allocated optimally during a disaster. A National Responder Talent Pool database helps in resource allocation by providing a real-time overview of available personnel and their capabilities. This allows for the efficient distribution of resources to areas and tasks that need them the most, maximising the impact of disaster response efforts.

## **Preparedness and Planning**

Maintaining a National Responder Talent Pool database is not just about responding to disasters; it is also about being prepared. Regularly updating and expanding the database ensures that organisations and government agencies are ready to tackle disasters when they occur. This proactive approach to disaster preparedness can save countless lives and reduce the overall impact of disasters on communities.

## **Deployment Responsibility**

The coordinating or lead agency plays a crucial role in disaster management by ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently, that response efforts are communicated and coordinated effectively, and that information is disseminated to relevant stakeholders including the public, (impacted and concerned). Depending on the jurisdiction and the nature of the disaster, the coordinating agency can vary, but it is always a government agency responsible for emergency management.

**In summary** - In our country, natural disasters are increasingly an unfortunate reality, and maintaining a National Responder Talent Pool database is a vital component of effective disaster response and recovery. The ability to mobilise, coordinate, and verify skilled personnel swiftly can make all the difference in saving lives and minimising the destruction caused by these catastrophes. It is imperative that organisations, governments, and communities recognise the importance of investing in and maintaining such databases to ensure a rapid, coordinated, and efficient response to natural disasters. By doing so, we can better protect our communities and ensure a more responsive and more resilient future in the face of adversity.

## Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner

To effectively mobilise, engage, and deploy a disaster response workforce when needed in the face of national, regional, or local disasters, the role of a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner becomes essential. This crucial capability encompasses a range of functions, including sourcing, attracting, onboarding, curating, credentialing, and maintaining a skilled and ready workforce. With the right Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner in place, the lead agency organisation can ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its response efforts in times of crisis.

A Deployment Strategic Workforce Partner should have both expertise and proven capability as a Managed Services Provider capable of providing services across the country. In the context of disaster response and the coordination of a National Responder Talent Pool database and conduit to the lead agency, relying on a national Deployment Strategic Workforce Partner would have numerous advantages:

- **Managed Services Provider:** A Managed Services Provider brings expertise managing and coordinating workforce task completion with panels of multi-disciplinary service providers. Key to successful strategic workforce deployment is ensuring that all service providers are capable, result-oriented, compliant, and motivated.
- **Wide Reach and Coverage:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner typically has a broad network and reach across the entire country. They can tap into a large pool of potential responders from various regions, ensuring that a diverse and well-distributed group of individuals is available for deployment. This is especially important in a large country like our own with such diverse geography and population centres.
- **Consistency and Standardisation:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner could establish standardised procedures for recruiting, inducting, training, and verifying the qualifications of responders. This consistency ensures that responders meet certain minimum standards and qualifications.
- **Resource Allocation:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner should be better positioned to allocate and payroll resources on a national scale. As the conduit to the lead agency, they support the assessment of the overall needs of the disaster response effort and deploy personnel and resources from regions with a surplus to areas where they are needed most. This prevents overloading certain regions while leaving others under-resourced.
- **Efficient Communication:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner could support the lead agency's communication systems to ensure efficient messaging to the right people, in the right location at the right time, allowing for rapid dissemination of information, updates, and instructions to responders in real-time, which is critical during a disaster when timely decisions and actions are essential.
- **Interagency Coordination:** whilst primarily responding to the lead agency, if required, a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner could work closely with other government agencies responsible for disaster management, such as emergency management agencies. This collaboration could ensure seamless coordination between various stakeholders involved in disaster response, including government departments, NGOs, and volunteers.
- **Data Management:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner could maintain a centralised database of qualified responders, which includes their qualifications, training records, and contact details. This database can be regularly updated and easily accessed during disaster response efforts, facilitating the quick identification and deployment of suitable personnel.
- **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner could ensure that responders comply with legal and regulatory requirements. This includes verifying background checks, certifications, and training records.
- **Payrolling accuracy:** The minimum wages and conditions an employee is entitled to are set out in awards (also known as modern awards). A Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner enables high degrees of assurance and compliance to the numerous modern awards that would be applicable to such a diversely qualified workforce, deployed during normal working hours, after hours, on weekends and during holidays. The risk of a national authority not paying a diverse qualified, multi-award and irregularly employed workforce can be minimised or removed with the right controls and partners.
- **Onboarding and Ongoing Training Compliance:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner could ensure that all responders are onboarded according to the compliance stipulations and training and upskilling is identified, coordinated, and recorded within the database. The numbers of the responder candidates will also facilitate rollout of bulk training programs, ensuring cost efficiency.
- **Long-Term Planning:** a Strategic Workforce Deployment Partner could also engage in long-term disaster preparedness planning, including training programs, resource procurement, and the establishment of partnerships with other agencies and organisations. This forward-thinking approach helps ensure that the country is well-prepared for future disasters.

**In Summary - Strategic Workforce Deployment Partnerships** offer many advantages in disaster response coordination. However, their effectiveness is intricately linked to three critical factors: adequate funding, robust infrastructure, and the ability to adapt to the unique requirements of each disaster scenario. Additionally, regional or local recruitment initiatives, often facilitated by various agencies, can play a pivotal role, especially in smaller-scale disasters or regions facing distinctive challenges and requirements. Therefore, a flexible and adaptable partnership approach to disaster response coordination may serve as the most effective strategy to minimise the trauma to impacted communities and keep our responders safe.