



## AUSTRALIA



### ***Emergency Management Australia***

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#### ***1. Legislation :***

In February 1974, the Federal Government approved the establishment of the Natural Disasters Organisation. The Government decided that the organisation should absorb the functions of the existing Directorate of Civil Defence, coordinate Commonwealth physical assistance to States and Territories in the event of a disaster, and assist them to improve disaster management capabilities. The new organisation was made responsible to the Federal Minister for Defence. Following a major review of activities, the name was changed to Emergency Management Australia (EMA) on 1 January 1993. Consistent with the Federal Government approach of not creating legislation if outcomes can be achieved by other means, EMA operates under Federal Government administrative arrangements and not under specific legislation.

Apart from Western Australia, the States and Territories have specific emergency management legislation. Although their legislation differs in the finer details, the powers and arrangements are fairly similar. The legislation provides for declarations of emergencies or disasters and provides for certain powers to enable effective disaster response.

#### ***2. Mission :***

EMA's mission is to reduce the impact of disasters and emergencies in Australia and its region. EMA's roles are to:

- develop, coordinate and support effective national emergency management arrangements;

- provide advice on emergency management matters to Commonwealth agencies, States and Territories, industry and the international community; and
- as an agent of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), coordinate emergency management assistance to countries in Australia's region of interest.

### ***3. Regulation and procedure :***

Australia has a federal system of government with three levels of responsibility. The Federal Government provides physical and financial support to the States and Territories for major disasters and, through consultative arrangements, undertakes a leadership role.

Each of the six States (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia) and the two Territories (Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory [surrounding the national capital of Canberra]) has primary responsibility for protection of life, property and the environment. They do this through legislation, committee structures and various capabilities such as police, fire, ambulance, emergency services, health and welfare agencies.

At the community level there are about 700 local governments throughout the country. They do not control disaster response agencies, but have a responsibility for such matters as disaster prevention and mitigation and preparation of coordinated disaster plans.

The Minister for Defence exercises Federal Government responsibility for emergency management matters through EMA. Comprehensive and integrated emergency management is based on a partnership between the Federal Government and the States and Territories.

Although, primary responsibility for the protection of life and property in Australia rests with State and Territory governments, the Federal Government is committed to assisting States and Territories to develop their emergency management capabilities in order to protect all Australian citizens and their property.

EMA is an agency within the Department of Defence and is responsible directly to the Federal Minister for Defence for coordination of disaster response at the Federal level.

Such assistance results from a formal request from a State or Territory if its government or commercial resources are unable to cope with an emergency. The Director General of EMA, after obtaining approval from the Minister for Defence, can call on the resources of any Federal Government agency including the Australian Defence Force to provide assistance to the States or Territories. This assistance is generally provided at no cost to the affected State or Territory. EMA manages provision of assistance from the National Emergency Management Coordination Centre at EMA's Canberra office.

EMA works closely with other elements of the Department of Defence, a wide range of Commonwealth authorities, State and Territory agencies, local government, and industry bodies. As an agent of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), EMA also interacts with the countries of the South Pacific region.

#### **4. Organisation:**

EMA is headed by the Director General and consists of four groups each headed by a Director.

*The Planning and Operations Group* is located in Canberra and is responsible for:

- managing EMA sponsored disaster response plans;
- coordinating Federal assistance to the States and Territories as well as countries in Australia's region;
- operating the National Emergency Management Coordination Centre;
- developing civil defence policy and plans;
- application of communications and information systems to emergency management; and
- the development, in conjunction with States, Territories and Federal agencies of plans for the management of natural and human caused risks to life and property.

*The Education and Training Group* is located at the Emergency Management Australia Institute at Mt Macedon, in the State of Victoria. The Group is responsible for:

- development and delivery of education and training;
- development and maintenance of emergency management competency standards and curriculum;
- emergency management research; and
- community education.

*The Development Group* is located in Canberra and is responsible for:

- development of disaster prevention and mitigation strategies;
- management of the Emergency Management Projects Program and Safer Communities Awards;
- marketing of emergency management to governments, industry and the community; and
- the coordination of emergency management policy development.

The Information Management and Business Group is located at both Canberra and Mount Macedon and is responsible for:

- promoting best practice in the management of information in emergency management;
- administration of the State Support Package;

- management of the Public Awareness program, national publications for emergency management and corporate displays;
- budget management;
- corporate performance and corporate reporting;
- human resource management;
- corporate policy development;
- contract development and management;
- marketing;
- coordination of facilities management, IT support and Library services; and
- general administrative support.

### **5. Finances:**

Under the Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements (NDRA), administered by the Federal Department of Finance and Administration, the Commonwealth provides funding assistance to States and Territories aimed at alleviating the financial burden associated with provision of natural disaster relief and infrastructure restoration. Under the arrangements, the Commonwealth undertakes to reimburse the States and Territories for expenditure in accordance with the NDRA formula, for a range of eligible relief measures.

While Commonwealth financial assistance is not normally provided until after a natural disaster has occurred, the NDRA framework effectively guarantees that a proportion of the expenditure incurred by States and Territories for the provision of disaster relief will be reimbursed by the Commonwealth, subject to the NDRA criteria being met.

The Commonwealth provides direct financial assistance to individuals affected by emergency situations. The Department of Social Security maintains existing payments to clients, provides income support payments under the usual conditions of eligibility to persons whose income has been affected by the emergency and also provides information, counseling and referral services.

**Emergency Management Australia**

**Director General  
Emergency Management Australia  
(Canberra)**

**Director  
Planning and  
Operations  
(Canberra)**

- . Disaster Coordination
- . Disaster Plans
- . Civil Defence
- . Emergency Management Communications Network

**Director  
Education and  
Training  
(Mt. Macedon)**

- . Education and Training
- . Curriculum and Doctrine Development
- . Research

**Director  
Development  
(Canberra)**

- . Marketing
- . Policy Development
- . Disaster Prevention and Mitigation

**Director  
Information Management  
And Business  
(Canberra/Mt Macedon)**

- . Information Management
- . Resource Management
- . Performance Reporting
- . Contract Management

**Mr. Tony PEARCE**

**Director General  
Emergency Management Australia**