

Terms of Reference

Review of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements

Context

On 26 October 2022, the Queensland Government announced its “*Good Jobs and Better Fire and Emergency Services to Support Queensland's Great Lifestyle*” response to the Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (the Government Response).

Queensland has strong and effective disaster management arrangements, however the Independent Review noted the need to continue to ensure the State's arrangements are fit for purpose in the context of emerging climate impacts.

The Independent Review found that Queensland's disaster management functions are better aligned with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and should be transferred to the stewardship of the QPS. The Government has accepted this recommendation in principle. The Government has also approved the expansion of the responsibilities of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to support further disaster preparedness programs and initiatives and better align with resilience agencies nationally.

Consistent with the recommendations of the Independent Review, the Government has requested the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM) conduct a review of Queensland's disaster management arrangements to inform any changes to the arrangements, legislative reforms, or any updates to the State Disaster Management Plan. This review will also inform the transition of disaster management functions to the QPS and other relevant agencies.

Authorising Environment

Section 16C of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Act) outlines the following functions for the Office of the IGEM, including:

- to regularly review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management by the State, including the State disaster management plan and its implementation;
- to regularly review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management by district groups and local groups, including district and local disaster management plans;
- to regularly review and assess cooperation between entities responsible for disaster management in the State, including whether the disaster management systems and procedures employed by those entities are compatible and consistent;
- to make disaster management standards;
- to regularly review and assess disaster management standards;
- to review, assess and report on performance by entities responsible for disaster management in the State against the disaster management standards;
- to work with entities performing emergency services, departments and the community to identify and improve disaster management capabilities, including volunteer capabilities;

- to monitor compliance by departments with their disaster management responsibilities
- to identify opportunities for cooperative partnerships to improve disaster management outcomes:
- to report to, and advise, the Minister about issues relating to the functions above
- to make all necessary inquiries to fulfil the functions above.

Purpose

In accordance with these functions, the review will broadly examine the structures and governance relevant to Queensland's disaster management arrangements including:

- the roles and responsibilities of parties to the arrangements;
- the role and effectiveness of disaster management committees reflected, and not reflected, in the Act including the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, State Disaster Management Group, District Disaster Management Committees, Local Disaster Management Committees and recovery focused committees;
- any matters to inform the appropriate allocation of State level disaster management functions across agencies in the context of outcomes from the Independent Review of QFES (noting the transition of the State Emergency Service and volunteer marine rescue functions to the QPS); and
- Any matters to inform update of the Act and State Disaster Management Plan to support: implementation of the structural elements of the Government Response; and clarification of roles and responsibilities of committees and parties to the arrangements.

In conducting the Review, the IGEM should ensure examples of good practice and any opportunities for improvement are highlighted in the report along with relevant observations, insights, findings and recommendations.

In addition, the IGEM is requested to consult with appropriate specialists to support the review.

Approach

The Office will work closely with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, relevant state agencies involved in disaster management, the State Disaster Coordinator (SDC), the Local Government Association of Queensland, and other relevant stakeholders to obtain information necessary to the Review.

The Review should invite submissions from all relevant state agencies, local governments, and in-scope committees.

The Review should consider recommendations arising from previous IGEM reviews and any relevant findings and recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

In conducting the Review, consideration must be given to any impost on front line staff currently operationally deployed.

Reporting

The Review report should be based on the Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland.

The report is to be provided by four months from commencement, to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services.

In providing its report, the IGEM may consider whether to provide an interim report into any of the individual matters outlined in these terms of reference. Any interim report is to be provided to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services at any appropriate time during the period of the Review.

Before finalising its reports, the IGEM should consult with relevant entities on the draft report, including observations, insights, findings and recommendations.