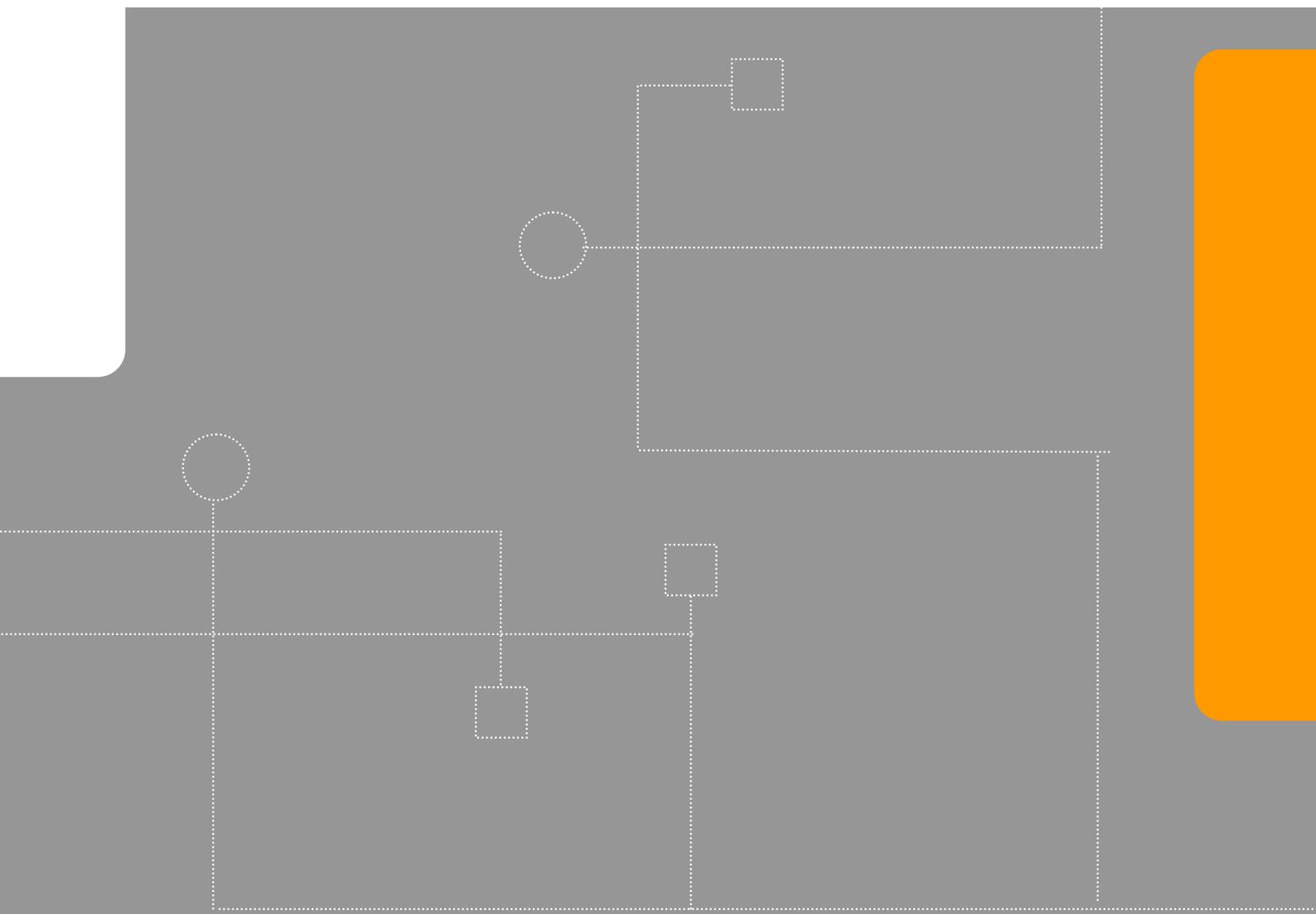Disaster Management

Strategic Policy Framework

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Emergency Services would like to acknowledge and thank all agencies, organisations and individuals involved in the development of the *Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework.* Your involvement has flagged key strategic disaster management issues that have helped shape and inform the Framework.

The Council of Australian Governments' report *Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements (2002)* identifies the need for a comprehensive, all hazards, all agencies approach to disaster management, especially with the emergence of new threats such as terrorism. This approach, including the disaster management elements and definitions used in the report, has been adopted in the development of this Framework.

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

Queensland's *Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework* (the Framework) is the State's key strategic tool for disaster management. The Framework establishes the vision for disaster management, aligns with Queensland Government priorities, and sets the direction for delivery of enhanced community safety and sustainability outcomes.

Queensland has long been vulnerable to impacts from a range of natural disasters, including cyclones, floods, storms and tsunamis. In recent years, new threats have emerged from greater reliance on technology, storage and transport of hazardous materials, the spread of exotic infectious diseases, and terrorism. The Framework is designed to guide development of initiatives to address disasters.

The Framework:

- Recognises the roles of stakeholders including all levels of government in the coordinated delivery of disaster mitigation, preparation, response, relief and recovery.
- Meets key responsibilities as required by s18(a) of the *Disaster Management Act 2003.*
- Enhances partnerships by encouraging participation of a broad range of stakeholders in initiatives to promote community safety.
- Strengthens transparency and accountability of government by establishing strategic priorities to guide the application of resources and reporting on achievement of outcomes.
- Aligns with strategic initiatives for disaster risk reduction internationally and across Australia.
- Acknowledges the relationship between Queensland and other states, territories and countries in major disaster events.
- Represents a key step in delivering Queensland's commitment to the Council of Australian Governments' reforms for natural disaster relief and mitigation arrangements.

The Framework will strengthen Queensland's disaster preparedness and capacity to implement effective coordinated initiatives to reduce the impact of disasters on our State and our communities.

I commend the *Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework* to you.

The Hon Peter Beattie MP
Premier for Queensland and Treasurer

INTRODUCTION

The Queensland *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Act) forms the legislative basis for disaster management activities within all levels of Government and the Queensland Disaster Management System. One of the key responsibilities outlined in the Act is for the establishment of a State Disaster Management Group. A key function of this Group is to develop a strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State.

The underlying basis for development of the *Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework* is the need for effective tools to enhance governance and accountability, and to promote integrated whole-of-government solutions to complex issues. A further influence has been the shift in national and international disaster management thinking from focusing on reaction towards pro-active mitigation, systematic risk analysis and risk reduction, and preparation.

The lessons from recent world disaster and emergency events are clear – a comprehensive all hazards, all agencies approach is the foundation of effective and efficient disaster management. This approach is captured within the principles of the Framework.

The Framework identifies principles that guide the development and implementation of policy and initiatives to achieve the State government's priorities, in particular the achievement of safer and more sustainable communities. It is a tool for the effective integration of disaster management planning and programming across agencies and sectors. It also provides a strategic benchmark against which reporting and evaluation of outcomes can be undertaken.

AIM OF THE FRAMEWORK

The aim of the Framework is to:

- Articulate the vision and goals for disaster management for the State in line with the objectives of the *Disaster Management Act 2003*.
- Outline the strategic direction to guide the development of disaster management policies and programs for Queensland.
- Focus on "a comprehensive, all Hazards, all Agencies" approach to disaster management.
- Align the strategic direction for disaster risk reduction with international and national reforms.
- Mainstream disaster mitigation into relevant areas of activity of government, non-government, small business and corporations.
- Outline the governance and accountability arrangements in place that support achievements of disaster management priorities.
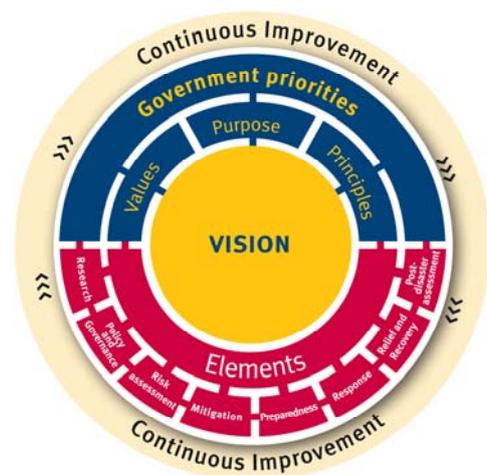
VISION

A safer community and a better quality of life in Queensland through world-class emergency and disaster services.

VALUES

- Protecting health, safety, quality of life and economic vitality.
- Building and maintaining partnerships and collaboration across all levels of government, community and industry, in all aspects of disaster management.
- Protecting our natural and built environment.
- Respecting the diversity of Queensland communities.
- Ensuring accountability and transparency of the Queensland disaster management arrangements.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The Framework is underpinned by the following general principles:

- A comprehensive, all hazards, all agencies approach by achieving the right balance of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, regardless of the nature of the hazard through established partnerships.
- Prepared communities ensuring they understand their role in disaster management arrangements.
- Consultative decision-making.
- A transparent, systematic and consistent approach to disaster risk assessment and management is promoted based on the Australian Risk Management Standard AUS:NZ 4360:2000.
- All levels of government apply effective corporate governance and are committed to continuous improvement of policy, programs, practices and service delivery to improve community safety.

ELEMENTS OF THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Framework's elements outline how a comprehensive, all hazards, all agencies approach including better prepared communities, will be applied in Queensland. The elements represent best practice disaster management as identified and defined in the COAG Report *Review of Natural Disaster Relief and Mitigation Arrangements.*

A continuous improvement approach will be applied to the Framework through the application and practise of the elements. This will enable regular enhancement of the Queensland Disaster Management System.

The definition of disaster and serious disruption from the *Disaster Management Act 2003* is used in this Framework.

> *A disaster a serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an event, that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption.*

> *A serious disruption is the loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; and/or widespread or severe property loss or damage; and/or widespread or severe damage to the environment.*

Disaster Research

Disaster research may be broadly understood as a systematic inquiry, before and after a disaster, into a relevant disaster management problem.

Greater investment in research has significant potential for high ratios of benefit to cost. Disaster research allows for continuous improvement through testing and analysis. Lessons learnt from post-disaster assessment and disaster management exercises can also contribute to the identification of best practice disaster management practices.

Objective

Use collaborative and best practice research to inform disaster management and improve the effectiveness of disaster management principles, policy development and practices.

Strategies

- Identify, support and resource research priorities.
- Capture lessons learnt to develop policy, manage research allocation, planning and resources.
- Establish a knowledge management framework.
- Translate knowledge into practice through review of plans and procedural systems and processes.
- Centralise research and access to results.
- Establish formal relationships with researchers to incorporate disaster management knowledge into effective policy and practice.
- Recognise and incorporate the principles of intellectual property in all research activities.

Key Performance Indicators

- Formal partnerships established with researchers.
- Research outcomes inform disaster management policy development and practice.

Policy & Governance

Policy and governance elements ensure clear direction of disaster management priorities, resource allocation and accountability through sound performance management and risk management for the whole disaster management system.

Objective

Disaster management outcomes are achieved through the development and implementation of sound policy and effective corporate governance.

Strategies

- Ensure clear and transparent decision making through collaboration, cooperation and communication.
- Implement effective governance through sound performance management and continuous improvement frameworks.
- Ensure consistent application of legislation, regulations and supporting policies.
- Review the disaster management system to:
  - streamline arrangements;
  - develop clear accountability, including defined roles and responsibilities at all levels of the disaster management system;
  - improve the communication flow process; and
  - develop whole-of-government media arrangements.
- Integrate effective disaster risk reduction initiatives into strategic and corporate plans at all levels of government, industry and commerce.

Key Performance Indicators

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in the disaster management system.
- Legislative requirements are supported by disaster management policies.

Disaster Risk Assessment

Disaster risk assessment is the process used to determine risk management priorities by evaluating and comparing the level of risk against predetermined standards or other criteria.

Disaster risk assessments determine community vulnerability through the identification of risks, likelihood and consequence of a disaster occurring. These assessments allow for an increased focus on anticipation, mitigation, and recovery and resilience to achieve safer and more sustainable communities.

Objective

Disaster risk assessments are used to protect life and property and contribute to sustainable development.

Strategies

- Ensure the integrity of risk assessments through alignment to the Australian Risk Management Standard, the provision of best practice models and rigorous evaluation.
- Ensure outcomes of disaster risk assessments are clearly articulated and transparent.
- Improve the understanding, coordination and resource allocation of disaster risk management at all levels through informed research.
- Assist all communities including Indigenous communities to implement disaster risk management processes.
- Develop risk registers at all levels of the disaster management system that clearly identify community vulnerability and the broader social and economic risks associated with disasters.

Key Performance Indicators

- Comprehensive disaster risk assessments are complete, relevant and updated regularly.

Disaster Mitigation

Disaster mitigation is the means taken in advance of, or after, a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and the environment.

The implementation of mitigation initiatives can offer sustainable cost savings to communities and government in the event of a disaster. They should be subject to rational, cost/benefit and social investment decisions, with special provision for remote, Indigenous and other communities.

Objective

Reduced risk and enhanced community resilience.

Strategies

- Mainstream mitigation into disaster management practice.
- Strengthen regionally coordinated mitigation initiatives through whole-of-government leadership.
- Improve land use management through the integration of disaster risk reduction into building regulation codes and standards, and educational curricula.
- Share knowledge and innovative solutions to build community resilience and self-reliance.

Key Performance Indicators

- Mitigation priorities are determined by evidence of disaster risk assessments.

Disaster Preparedness

Disaster preparedness includes arrangements that ensure that, should an emergency occur, all those resources and services which are needed to cope with the effects can be efficiently mobilised and deployed.

Community, volunteer and agency preparedness is critical to assist in minimising the impact of an event on the community and to ensure effective and timely operational response in the event of a disaster. All obstacles to volunteer involvement should be removed given their importance in natural disaster management arrangements.

Objective
Create aware and prepared communities.

Strategies
- Ensure alignment of state, district, local, and specific disaster management plans.
- Enhance the understanding of and planning for catastrophic events.
- Drive behavioural change through targeted community disaster management education and awareness initiatives.
- Appropriately resource communities against the level of disaster risk, through continual review and improvement.
- Utilise community networks to enhance disaster management resilience and sustainability.
- Exercise to test disaster management plans and procedures.

Key Performance Indicators
- Increased level of community disaster awareness.
- Increased level of community disaster preparedness.
- Disaster management plans are in place at all levels of the disaster management system.

Disaster Response

Disaster response includes the actions taken in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an emergency to ensure that its effects are minimised.

The importance of a timely, coordinated approach to disaster response is essential with greater demands being placed upon resources due to the increase in urbanisation, proximity of industry to high-density areas, and urban congestion. This timely, coordinated approach requires the clear definition of roles and responsibilities of those involved in response activities.

Objective
The impacts of a disaster are minimised by effective and efficient disaster response.

Strategies
- Ensure effective operational capabilities exist within the disaster management system.
- Ensure a coordinated approach exists across all levels of the disaster management system through the clear definition of roles and responsibilities.
- Develop and implement an effective communication strategy that enhances public warning and information.
- Enhance community volunteer capability.
- Ensure consistent application of standard operating procedures and other response planning tools.
- Consider predeployment of personnel and assets in anticipation of an emergency or disaster.
- Ensure planning incorporates an immediate assessment of the scale and scope of damage and priority needs.
- Utilise technology to support operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Key Performance Indicator
- All disasters are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.

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Disaster Relief and Recovery

Disaster relief is the provision of immediate shelter, life support and human needs to persons affected by, or responding to an emergency.

Disaster recovery is the coordinated process of supporting affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic, physical wellbeing.

Timely coordinated deployment of disaster relief and recovery is equally important as effective disaster response in minimising the impact on the communities affected by a disaster. The application of a holistic approach to relief and recovery requires the clear identification of the roles and responsibilities all stakeholders involved in the process.

Objective
Improved functions of communities following a disaster.

Strategies
- Ensure a holistic approach to community relief and recovery (immediate short and long-term) inclusive of social (especially immediate welfare support, health and psychosocial), economic, infrastructure (including power, water and sewerage) and environmental considerations.
- Ensure the preparation of a comprehensive plan addressing immediate short and long term recovery needs of the community (including a check list).
- Consider the appointment of a coordinating taskforce to assist the Local Disaster Management Group.
- Ensure a proactive communication strategy to keep the community fully aware of actions being taken.
- Enhance disaster relief arrangements.
- Ensure recovery arrangements remain flexible and adaptable for all communities including Indigenous communities.
- Encourage stakeholders to embed sound business continuity practices that address all elements of disaster management including relief and recovery.

Key Performance Indicator

• Relief and recovery agencies are properly integrated into disaster management arrangements.

Post-Disaster Assessment

Post-disaster assessment evaluates risks revealed by an emergency or disaster event in order to improve future development of mitigation measures. Post-disaster assessment forms part of continuous improvement of whole system.

Analysis of Post-disaster assessment can lead to confirmation of good practice or identification of areas of process, policy or training relating to response, relief and recovery that need to be addressed for future disaster events. These assessments can also provide particular lessons relating to mitigation to improve community safety for the future.

Objective

Post-disaster assessment strengthens Queensland's disaster management capability.

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Strategies
- Improve Post-disaster assessments through the application of Australian Risk Management Standard.
- Undertake Post-disaster assessment to review the effectiveness of disaster management including the determination of the social and economic costs of disasters (tangible and intangible).
- Implement a knowledge management Framework to capture and implement lessons learnt.
- Maintain a log of strategies that work well and opportunities for improvement before, during and after a disaster event.

Key Performance Indicator
- Lessons learnt from disaster events and disaster management exercises are embedded into disaster management planning.

APPLICATION

Under the Act, the State Disaster Management Group is responsible for ensuring that disaster management and disaster operations in Queensland are consistent with this Framework. However, the application of the Framework is a whole-of-government responsibility with the Group overseeing the implementation of the Framework on behalf of the State.

The committees established by the State Disaster Management Group will develop mechanisms to comply with the directions and requirements included in the Framework and will report on strategy implementation and key performance indicators to the State Disaster Management Group.

Specific state government agencies and organisations will be designated as lead agencies with specific threat-based or functional responsibilities.

Additional policy instruments will support the Framework, enabling initiatives at the operational level to link with and deliver on the strategic goals. These instruments, including planning guidelines and strategic and operational plans, will provide practical systems to mainstream risk reduction into policies, planning and programming at all levels. The Framework will inform development of the State Disaster Management Plan and the ongoing review and enhancement of Queensland's disaster management arrangements.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The Framework is a dynamic document and will be reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure consistency with national initiatives and Queensland Government priorities.

Key performance indicators will be monitored and reported annually to the State Disaster Management Group to assess the progress of the implementation of the Framework. The key indicators will:
- Measure the outcomes of the Framework.
- Set benchmarks.
- Measure the effectiveness of policies, strategies and programs and inform policy development.
- Identify agency accountability and responsibility for each performance indicator.
- Identify opportunities for improvement that lead to enhancement of the Disaster Management System.

STAKEHOLDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following stakeholder roles and responsibilities have been adapted from the COAG Report *Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements.*

Commonwealth Government

The Commonwealth Government provides guidance and support to the States and Territories in developing their capacity for dealing with emergencies and disasters including civil defence. The Commonwealth Government also provides physical and financial assistance to a requesting State or Territory in the event that a disaster occurs which is beyond its response capability.

The Attorney General is responsible for disaster and emergency management matters. The agency through which the Attorney General exercises this responsibility is Emergency Management Australia (EMA).

There are a number of Australian Government disaster management committees. The peak national body for disaster management services is the Augmented Australasian Police Ministers Council. The Council comprises Attorney General (Chair), States and Territories Ministers with responsibility for emergency management and President of the Australian Local Government Association.

The Australian Emergency Management Committee (AEMC) is the peak consultative disaster management forum, charged with responsibility for managing national disaster management issues and policies. AEMC supports the Ministerial Council in the achievement of its objectives and to ensure a cross-jurisdictional, whole-of-government effort to manage national strategic disaster management issues and policies.

State Government Departments
The State Government has primary responsibility to coordinate disaster management system in Queensland. This includes disaster mitigation (prevention), preparedness, response and recovery. It is also responsible for the delivery of emergency services, including fire and ambulance services, medical and hospital services directly to the community and provide resources to effectively support a disaster affected community (ie in support of local government disaster management arrangements).   The peak disaster management governing body at the state level is the State Disaster Management Group, established under the *Disaster Management Act 2003*. Functional and threat specific planning and development responsibilities are placed on lead agency departments in respect to threat based or specific functional responsibilities.

District Authorities
Disaster district coordination at the district level is provided through District Disaster Management Group. The District Disaster Management Groups are comprised of the District Disaster Coordinator appointed by the Governor in Council, a representative from local governments in the district, representatives from lead public sector entities that provide functional and threat specific services in that disaster district, and individuals appointed by the State Disaster Management Group. The positions of District Disaster Coordinators are occupied by senior officers in each of the Queensland Police Service districts.

Local Authorities
Local governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Councils have a key role in identifying and understanding the credible hazards and risks that could impact on the safety and sustainability of their communities. Their role is to put in place mitigation, preparation, response and recovery strategies and arrangements, within the ambit of their resources and responsibility. This is achieved through Local Disaster Management Groups and the development of local disaster management plans that enhance their community's preparedness to manage the consequences of a disaster and provide a vital link to individuals, voluntary organisations and community organisations that are integral to the execution of disaster management strategies.

Volunteer Organisations
Queensland state and local government have developed close partnership arrangements with a range of volunteer organisations for their involvement in disaster management and emergency services.

The State Emergency Service (SES) is an integral part of the state disaster management system by virtue of its core responsibilities under the *Disaster Management Act 2003.* SES units and groups are established by local governments to provide assistance to the community immediately after a disaster impact, as well as providing education programs to the community to lessen the impact of a disaster event. This does not preclude SES providing support to statutory services in respect to their day-to-day incident responsibilities. It does this, however, as an extension of skills and capabilities developed in accordance with its core counter disaster responsibilities.

The group of marine rescue organisations such as the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association and the Australian Volunteer Coastguard provide a valuable service to the Queensland community in providing a rescue service to marines.

Other philanthropic organisations such as Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul and local community volunteer groups contribute significantly to the provision of welfare support services during the recovery phase of disaster management. The contribution of all these organisations is coordinated within the established disaster management Framework.

Media
Media organisations, particularly public and private radio and television organisations, have responsibilities in ensuring that timely and appropriate warnings and advice on disasters is broadcast to communities at the request of relevant authorities. They also have a role to play in educating the community.

Industry
Industry organisations including transport, information technology, communications, insurance, town planning, building and construction; infrastructure providers; and primary producers all have a key role to play in disaster management, particularly in risk assessment and mitigation.

A range of policies, guidelines and fact sheets are available under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997 to* guide development in areas prone to natural disasters. Particularly, *State Planning Policy 1/03: Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide* and Guideline provides guidance on how the natural hazards of flood, bushfire and landslide can be adequately considered when making decisions about development. More information is available from www.ipa.qld.gov.au

Research
The research community has a key role in advancing knowledge of natural disasters, their costs and consequences, and cost-effective mitigation measures, so that disaster management decision-makers can take the most effective action in planning, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. In particular the research community can contribute by:
• playing a leading role in systematic data collection and analysis;
• playing a leading role in a systematic national programme of disaster risk assessments; and
• developing innovative ideas about better measures to mitigate and respond to disasters.

Communities
A number of actions can be taken by local communities and individuals to become more resilient, and in particular, they should:
• share a high level of disaster awareness and collective preparedness within the community that should be taken in the event of a disaster;
• provide active support for government and community efforts to minimise the possible consequence of disasters, such as natural hazard risk reduction measures; and
• provide a culture of support and recognition for volunteers.

GLOSSARY

Disaster	A serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an event, that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption *(Disaster Management Act 2003, s13(1))*
Disaster management	Arrangements about managing the potential adverse effects of an event, including, for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster (*Disaster Management Act 2003, s14*).
Disaster mitigation	The means taken in advance of, or after, a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and the environment. *(COAG, Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements: 2002)*
Disaster preparedness	Arrangements that ensure that, should an emergency occur, all those resources and services which are needed to cope with the effects can be efficiently mobilised and deployed. *(COAG, Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements: 2002)*
Disaster research	May be broadly understood as a systematic inquiry, before and after a disaster, into a relevant disaster management problem. *(COAG, Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements: 2002)*
Disaster response capability	The ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or a disaster in the local government's area (*Disaster Management Act 2003, S80(2)*).
Disaster response	Actions taken in anticipation of, during and immediately after an emergency to ensure that its effects are minimised. *(COAG, Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements: 2002)*
Disaster relief and recovery	Disaster relief is the provision of immediate shelter, life support and human needs of persons affected by, or responding to, an emergency. Disaster recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency-affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional social, economic, physical wellbeing. *(COAG, Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements: 2002)*
Disaster risk assessment	The process used to determine risk management priorities by evaluating and comparing the level of risk against predetermined standards, target risk levels or other criteria. *(COAG, Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements: 2002)*

Event	An event means any of the following: o a cyclone, earthquake, flood, storm, storm tide, tornado, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other natural happening; o bushfire; o an explosion or fire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, or a gas leak;• an infestation, plague, or epidemic; o an infestation, plague, or epidemic; o an attack against the State; or o another event similar to the above events. An event may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions. *(Disaster Management Act 2003, S16(1)&(2)).*
Hazard	A source of potential harm, or a situation with a potential to cause loss *(Emergency Management Australia, 2004).*
Post-disaster assessment	Addresses risks revealed by an emergency or disaster event in order to improve future development of mitigation measures. Post disaster assessment forms part of continuous improvement of the whole system. *(Adapted from COAG, Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements: 2002)*
Residual risk	The level of risk remaining after implementation of a risk treatment *(AS/NZS 4360:2004).*
Risk	The chance of something happening that may have an impact on the safety and wellbeing of your community. It includes risk as an opportunity as well as a threat and is measured in terms of consequences and likelihood *(Adapted from AS/NZS 4360:2004).*
Risk identification	The process of identifying what can happen, why, and how *(Australian Emergency Management Glossary, 1998).*
Risk management	The culture, processes, and structures that are directed towards realizing potential opportunities whilst managing adverse effects *(AS/NZS 4360:2004).*
Risk reduction	Actions taken to lessen the likelihood, negative consequences, or both, associated with a risk *(AS/NZS 4360:2004).*
Risk treatment	Process of selection and implementation of measures to modify risk *(AS/NZS 4360:2004).*
Serious disruption	Serious disruption means: (a) loss of human life, or illness or injury to humans; or (b) widespread or severe property loss or damage; (c) widespread or severe damage to the environment *(Disaster Management Act 2003, S13(2)).*