



Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management

Emergency Management Reforms Project

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Mr Mike Blake  
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Dear Mr Blake

## **SUBMISSION FROM THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REFORMS PROJECT DIRECTOR**

As requested during our meeting of 8 November 2016, the following comments are provided from the Emergency Management Reforms Project Director, Mr Andrew Lea.

Mr Lea has been the Director SES since 2001. In light of 52 Cabinet-endorsed recommendations arising from the 2014-15 independent review of emergency management arrangements in Tasmania by the Department of Justice (DoJ), Mr Lea received a fixed term variation of duties to lead the implementation of the 52 recommendations – to become known as the Emergency Management Reforms Project.

The following comments are provided against the Flood Review Terms of Reference:

### ***The effectiveness of the strategies, preparedness and plans related to managing flood risk in Tasmania that were in place prior to the June 2016 floods occurring; including existing and potential levee systems***

A number of the DoJ recommendations, currently being implemented through the Emergency Management Reforms Project, will address preparedness issues identified following the 2013 Tasmanian Bushfires Inquiry. These are detailed in the attached action plan against the 10 project output areas.

As these reforms had not been implemented before the June 2016 flood event, it is likely that similar issues may have presented themselves again. When making Flood Review recommendations, it is suggested that you consider the preparedness-related recommendations already being implemented as part of the Emergency Management Reforms Project.

The following summary of progress against each project output area should help you to appreciate what reform work is already underway:

- **Review of the Tasmanian Emergency Management Plan:** A total review and re-write is underway to incorporate elements of 17 DoJ recommendations, plus other issues identified during consultation. The plan will be renamed the Tasmanian

Emergency Management Arrangements (TEMA) per DoJ recommendation 40. It is intended that the TEMA be more user friendly by including an on-line compendium that will include links to other related references/documents.

- **Review State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) Terms of Reference:** New SEMC Terms of Reference have been developed that addressed elements of 11 DoJ recommendations. Apart from the core emergency services organisational Chiefs/Directors, the new Terms of Reference include much broader and higher-level membership: Secretaries of all agencies; CEO Local Government Association; CEO Tasmania Health Service; and the three Regional Controllers. The new SEMC Terms of Reference were approved in July 2016.
- **New Ministerial Emergency Management Committee:** Terms of Reference for a new standing State Emergency Management Ministerial Committee (SEMMLC), chaired by the Premier have been developed and are awaiting approval. They were tested with a SEMMLC meeting during Exercise Amphitrite in October 2016. This output will address elements associated with seven DoJ recommendations.
- **Review State Control Centre Guidelines and control arrangements:** The review is ongoing and, following a number of amendments resulting from Exercise Amphitrite, is currently awaiting completion of the review of the Tasmanian Emergency Management Plan and the revised emergency management legislation. This output will address elements associated with 10 DoJ recommendations.
- **Enhance exercise and lessons management arrangements:** A business case has been developed to specifically address three DoJ recommendations, estimated by DoJ to require an increased annual investment of \$1.5M. The business case proposes the establishment of a three person Exercise and Lessons Management (ELM) Unit that will manage/coordinate an annual program of priority multi-agency emergency management-related exercises under the oversight of the SEMC and with the financial assistance of an annual Emergency Management Exercise Fund. This fund will help agencies fund priority multi-agency exercise expenses. The ELM Unit will also capture and coordinate the reporting and treatment of lessons arising from exercises and actual emergencies under the direction of the SEMC. To assist agencies with the treatment of lessons learnt, an annual Lessons Management Fund has been proposed. The Unit will also develop an on-line lessons portal, similar to Victoria, for the sharing of lessons between key stakeholders. The ELM Unit will provide the Chair and executive for the existing Inter-Agency Exercise Coordination Group, with renewed multi-agency representation, along with representation from key Government Business Enterprises and Non-Government Organisations.
- **Amend emergency management legislation:** This output will address elements associated with eight DoJ recommendations, plus a number of issues identified during the 2012 review of the *Emergency Management Act 2006*, which was suspended due to the 2013 Tasmanian Bushfires Inquiry. In summary, the proposed changes are expected to provide:
  - a standing ministerial-level committee on emergency management;
  - a more forward-looking, pre-emptive and flexible posture for the authorisation of emergency powers and for declarations of a state of emergency, including the provision of a new declaration of a state of alert, as part of the recommended graduated scale of emergency;
  - clarity on municipal-level functions and responsibilities;

- new administrative and emergency management provisions that specifically address relief, recovery and restoration requirements following major emergencies; and
  - amendments of an administrative or consequential nature, such as allowing the establishment of sub-committees, clarifying or streamlining appointment and reporting responsibilities, and updating the interpretations and certain nomenclature.
- **Enhance emergency management support to local government:** A business case has been developed to specifically address five DoJ recommendations, estimated by DoJ to require an increased annual investment of \$300K, at least for the increased emergency management planning support only. The business case proposes three new SES Regional Planning and Development Officers (RPDO), to provide added support for the required municipal-level emergency management planning and training. The main focus of the RPDOs will be the preparedness of the councils and the municipal authorities for managing emergencies. The RPDOs, the councils and the emergency management sector will be further supported with an additional Community Development Officer (CDO) and a Planning Officer Community Protection (POCP). The CDO's focus will be on community preparedness, similar to the successful Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) CDO work for bushfire hazard (eg, *Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods*), but for other major hazards like flood and storm. Similarly, the POCP will develop community protection plans to mitigate the local impact of major hazards other than bushfire, such as flood and storm. The focus of the CDO and POCP will be on community preparedness, not agencies/councils.
  - **Enhance disaster recovery arrangements:** This output addresses elements associated with 10 DoJ recommendations. These recommendations, along with lessons learnt from the recent June floods will be considered during a comprehensive review of Tasmania's recovery arrangements, which will inform the review and development of the TEMA and the legislative amendments. The review recently commenced and is being led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Office of Security and Emergency Management). A key output of the review of recovery arrangements will be a reviewed State Recovery Plan.
  - **Enhance communications and information systems support:** This is primarily associated with an analysis of the sustainability of WebEOC (information management system) and associated funding issues across all agencies. Tasmania Police Special Response and Counter-Terrorism is leading this work and is expected to report its findings at the December SEMC meeting.
  - **Other structural changes and reviews:** This relates to three DoJ recommendations associated with the abolishment of the Security and Emergency Management Advisory Group, the expansion of the Tasmanian Security and Emergency Management Group to include TFS and the development of SEMC policies for emergency management committees (and plans). The development of the SEMC policies will need to await the outcomes of some of the other outputs above.

***Community preparation, resilience and awareness, including awareness of insurance matters, relating to major flood events in Tasmania.***

The above output – '*Enhance emergency management support to local government*' – will, over time, specifically address improvements in community preparedness for floods and other hazards. It follows the successful community development and community protection planning work undertaken by TFS for the bushfire hazard.

***The causes of the floods which were active in Tasmania over the period 4 – 7 June 2016 including cloud-seeding, State-wide water storage management and debris management.***

No comment.

***The use and efficacy of forecasting, community alerts, warnings and public information by authorities in responding to flood events.***

While not specifically within the scope of current Emergency Management Reforms Project work, the author has been on a number of national forums that considered the responsibilities for the operation, maintenance and replacement of river gauges used by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) for analysing flood conditions and issuing flood warnings. Owners of these gauges vary and not all are placed for the purpose of assessing flood behaviour and generating flood warnings. Those that have been installed by the BoM for the purpose of flood warning are not necessarily owned by the BoM and replacement or maintenance responsibilities for these particular gauges remains unclear.

It is also apparent that the network of river gauges used to generate flood warnings could be expanded, particularly for a number of smaller, but flood prone catchments in each region (particularly the NW Region). The major barrier for this work to proceed appears to be the lack of funding, and to some extent the lack of clarity over which agency or which level of government would be responsible.

***The effectiveness of transition from response to recovery in the week following the June floods; including capacity and priorities for infrastructure repair, and immediate assistance payments.***

No comment.

***Consideration of the detrimental environmental effects of the flooding upon the landscape, and what effective mitigation measures may be necessary to avoid similar events.***

No comment.

***And any other matters relevant to the terms of reference including matters relating to the floods in Huonville.***

No further comment.

Should you require further information, please contact Mr Lea on [andrew.lea@ses.tas.gov.au](mailto:andrew.lea@ses.tas.gov.au) or 03-6173 2871.

Yours sincerely



**ANDREW LEA**

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