EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PREFACE

Introduction

Emergency management encompasses the services provided or funded by governments for emergencies such as medical emergencies, hazardous materials, fires, floods, earthquakes, landslides, storms and transport accidents. It includes government coordination of emergency (disaster) management plans, and the operations of service providers. These policies and services assist in:

- improving the awareness and capacity of the community to cope with emergencies through planning, training, warning systems and public education;
- reducing the frequency and severity of the impact of emergency incidents;
- undertaking overall operational coordination and response; and
- restoring and rehabilitating the community following emergencies.

Emergency management is essentially about reducing the level of risk to the community. It encompasses activities from prevention and preparedness to response and post-impact recovery for events ranging from relatively minor incidents to major disasters. Collectively, the activities of emergency management agencies reduce the negative impact of emergencies and improve the level and perception of safety in the community.

Scope of the sector

Emergency service providers do not operate in isolation. The management of emergencies often requires the cooperation of the statutory lead agencies — the fire and ambulance services, the State and Territory Emergency Services (S/TES) and the police — with each other and with other agencies such as:

- hospitals and public health authorities;
- public and private land managers and resource providers;
- local councils;
- community and voluntary organisations;
- utilities; and
- public and private port and transport enterprises.

There is a distinction between the role of whole-of-government emergency management and the role of statutory lead agencies. The former deals with the overall government coordination of emergencies from a comprehensive, all-hazards, all-agencies, prepared community perspective. The latter deals with those elements of emergency management inherent in each agency's legislation.

Whole-of-government emergency management plans are designed to provide for leadership and coordination when an emergency is beyond the capacities of the statutory lead agency. The roles of the statutory lead agency do not change in such cases, but they become subject to a higher level of coordination.