



Planning and Capability Requirements for Catastrophic and Cascading Events

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PROJECT UTILISATION OPPORTUNITIES

Within the initial two years of the project, several utilisation opportunities have been identified. Some of these are outlined on this poster.

CAPABILITY MATURITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

The connection between disaster planning, capability and capacity are essential, but often overlooked. In collaboration with end-users (Emergency Management Victoria and Home Affairs), the research team has developed a capability maturity assessment tool, designed for use by jurisdictions and organisations to assess the current maturity of their capabilities utilising a series of criteria. The tool is Excel-based and easy to tailor to specific contexts. Functions to support summary reporting have been incorporated. The tool can be utilised on a longitudinal basis to assist jurisdictions and organisations to measure and report on their preparedness.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP

Few leaders in their careers will experience a truly catastrophic event. The extent to which Australia has previously experienced a national level catastrophe is debatable, with perhaps the Spanish Flu and Cyclone Tracy being events of most significance. To promote leadership styles and strategies that have been previously utilised with success, the research team has created a crisis leadership case study based on the experiences of Major-General Alan Stretton in leading relief efforts following Cyclone Tracy. This case study was recently presented to volunteers and staff of the Victoria State Emergency Service as part of a leadership development exercise. Key points from the case study are that leaders need to be decisive, agile, curious, politically aware, collaborative, self-aware, strategic and at times empathetic. The case study can be presented to other end-users.

Example

Element	1 = Initial	2 = Developing	3 = Established	4 = Self-maintaining	Score	Notes and comments
People	Individual roles, functions and skills are defined. Capacity begins to be established.	Sufficient trained, motivated and skilled personnel available. However capacity targets are not established and personnel are not documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Sufficient trained, motivated and skilled personnel available. However capacity targets are not established and personnel are not documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Number of trained, motivated and skilled personnel available exceeds capacity targets.	2	See example summary table, p. 4
People	Assignments for surge capacity have not been completed.	Assignments for surge capacity are established and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Assignments for surge capacity are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Assignments for surge capacity are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	2	Assignments for surge capacity are defined in the Incident Action Plan. Most are in place with Victoria and Queensland. Capabilities register update done at ANU, EMVIC, EOCX, EOCX sub-committee.
People	Capacity building pathways are not defined.	Capacity building pathways are defined and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Capacity building pathways are defined and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Capacity building pathways are defined and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	2	Our organisation has training pathways defined. There is no wider sector training strategy for the capability.
Resources	Insufficient resources.	Sufficient resources available. However capacity targets are not established and personnel are not documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Sufficient resources available. However capacity targets are not established and personnel are not documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Available resources exceed capacity targets.	2	Capacity targets were developed as part of workforce planning completed in 2018.
Resources	Assignments for surge capacity have not been completed.	Assignments for surge capacity are established and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Assignments for surge capacity are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Assignments for surge capacity are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	2	Resources have been provided by other states previously.
Resources	Resource capacity building pathways are not defined.	Resource capacity building pathways are defined and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Resource capacity building pathways are defined and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	Resource capacity building pathways are defined and personnel are documented in plans of intention for major emergencies.	2	See procurement strategy excel.
Governance	Roles and responsibilities are not defined.	Roles and responsibilities are defined and documented.	Roles and responsibilities are defined and documented.	Roles and responsibilities are defined and documented.	2	Roles and responsibilities are defined in Incident Action Plan.
Governance	No systematic governance strategy, monitoring, reporting and improvement.	Systemic governance strategy, monitoring, reporting and improvement.	Systemic governance strategy, monitoring, reporting and improvement.	Systemic governance strategy, monitoring, reporting and improvement.	2	Systemic governance strategy, monitoring, reporting and improvement.
Governance	Advisory activities are not defined and documented.	Advisory activities are defined and documented.	Advisory activities are defined and documented.	Advisory activities are defined and documented.	2	Independent review into risk-based assurance is provided.
Systems	Four security levels defined.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	2	Organised in internal audit trail (completed in 2017).
Systems	Systems are not defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	2	See post event review into disaster incident.
Systems	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are not defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	Systems and use of IT, project and other systems are defined and documented.	2	No business continuity plans have been reviewed in the last 12 months.
Processes	Processes are not defined and documented.	Processes are defined and documented.	Processes are defined and documented.	Processes are defined and documented.	2	Post event debrief report identified that processes require further embedding across the sector.
Processes	Processes are not well understood by personnel.	Processes are understood by personnel.	Processes are understood by personnel.	Processes are understood by personnel.	2	Post event debrief report found that the understanding of processes was inconsistent.

Figure (1) Capability Maturity Assessment Tool

POLICY REFORM AND CHANGE

It is inevitable that emergency management resources will be overwhelmed by a future disaster, as organisations are largely resourced for only routine events. Existing emergency management doctrine espouses an all-agencies approach which is government-centric. To plan and prepare for catastrophic disasters it is necessary to look beyond a government-centric emergency management model to a whole-of-community approach.

The occurrence of catastrophic disasters will require resources from across different jurisdictions. This requires resources, systems and processes to be interoperable and for arrangements to allow for national coordination. Therefore, a nationwide approach to planning and preparedness for catastrophic disasters is necessary.

Research to date concludes that the all-hazards, all-agencies approach should be replaced with an all-hazards, nationwide whole-of-community approach.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Currently the Commonwealth has no overarching or specific counter-disaster legislation. In the absence of legislation there is Commonwealth power to respond to emergencies within the areas of Commonwealth responsibility. Further, there is an inherent power to deal with catastrophic disasters vested in the Crown as part of the prerogative power of the Crown and now incorporated into the Executive Power of the Commonwealth. Exactly what constitutes a 'catastrophic disaster' is open to debate and, in the absence of legislation, may be the subject of judicial challenge. It is argued that a disaster where a state government is overwhelmed, such that the state itself is at risk of collapse and there is no effective state government, would be a national catastrophic disaster that would justify Commonwealth intervention in order to restore effective state government. What disaster, short of the collapse of state government, would be sufficient for direct Commonwealth action cannot be conclusively defined.

In the absence of legislation and a truly catastrophic event, the Commonwealth's authority to exercise national leadership and coordinate Commonwealth, state and private assets will depend on good will and cooperation. The extent of the Commonwealth's executive power cannot be identified until the circumstances of the particular disaster have been identified.

Failing to define, in legislation, the role and power of the Commonwealth will leave the Commonwealth to 'cope ugly' with any particular catastrophe. That may be acceptable as it will leave the Commonwealth with adaptive flexibility. It has, however, been a consistent recommendation of commentators that the Commonwealth should legislate to ensure that the Commonwealth is able to cope with an inevitable catastrophe. A model Act has been drafted for end-users.

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