

# **Local Government Emergency Management Framework**

**Adopted by LGA Board of  
Directors**

**July 2019**

## Executive Summary

The Local Government Emergency Management Framework exists to provide clarity and direction to the local government sector in South Australia with regard to emergency management.

Climate change, recent emergencies, community expectations, technology and economic disruption are among the big shifts which underpin the need for the local government sector to better understand our role in emergency management. Doing so is critical to better manage current risks, prepare for an uncertain future and reduce impacts and costs to communities.

Historically, local government emergency management has focussed on the operational support provided when emergencies occur. In practice, our sector makes a much greater contribution through reducing disaster risks and strengthening community resilience before emergencies occur, and supporting communities through the long recovery process.

This updated framework seeks to better reflect the breadth of councils' roles in emergency management and supports the following vision:

*Communities are disaster resilient because emergency risks are understood across the community, mitigated wherever possible, and there are effective systems to ensure community safety and wellbeing when emergencies occur.*

The framework is structured around the key areas of

- Disaster risk reduction - action to avoid the creation of new disaster risks, reducing existing disaster risks, and managing any residual risk;
- Incident operations - actions undertaken, immediately before, during and immediately after an incident; and
- Recovery - the process of restoring emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing, reconstructing physical infrastructure and restoring the environment following an emergency.



For each of these areas, the framework provides clarity of role and establishes strategic objectives for the local government sector. The framework concludes with a summary of roles for councils, the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA-SA), regional LGAs, the Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG) and LGASA Mutual, and description of the support resources available to councils.

## Foreword

Councils have a long history of supporting communities when emergencies occur.

Responses to recent emergencies such as the Thomas Foods Factory Fire in Murray Bridge in early 2018, the 2015 Sampson Flat and Pinery fires and the 2016 Statewide Blackout and storm events demonstrate the significant support that councils provide to their communities during and after major emergencies.

This framework reflects the evolving role of local government in emergency management.

In particular, it emphasises the critical role that councils play in reducing disaster risks before emergencies happen, and in the often long recovery process after the emergency has passed. These roles complement the long standing functions of councils supporting communities and emergency services when emergencies occur.

This version of the framework reflects the significant progress that our sector has made in a few short years. Through the i-Responda operating platform, the Local Government Functional Support Group and more recently Council Ready, our sector has demonstrated our ability to work together to drive a coordinated approach to emergency management.

The LGA has invested heavily in supporting councils with emergency management. I encourage all councils to use this framework – and the support resources that sit beneath it – to strengthen emergency management activities in your council.



Sam Telfer

LGA President

July 2019

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why a Local Government Emergency Management Framework?

Emergency management is about preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies that may affect the community and endanger life, property or the environment.

Community expectations, recent emergency events and shifts in policy and legislation are creating new expectations of local government in relation to emergency management, and adding to an already complex policy and legislative framework.

Climate change amplifies the need to better mitigate our known emergency risks and better understand emerging risks. It also means that we need to be ready to respond to emergencies that will occur more often and with less predictability than ever before.

Technological, demographic, social and economic changes will continue to create new disruptors and previously unseen emergencies, and exacerbate existing emergency risks. These challenges may also present new opportunities to strengthen resilience in communities.

Local government emergency management has historically focussed on the operational support that councils provide when emergencies occur. In practice, local government makes a much greater contribution through reducing disaster risks, strengthening community resilience, and leadership, coordination and restoration of community assets in recovery.

This broader framing of emergency management accords with a range of international, national and state based policy directions which emphasise disaster risk reduction and disaster resilience as a means to better manage current emergency risks, prepare for an uncertain future and reduce costs to communities.

*Across South Australia, councils play important and diverse roles in emergency management because of their strong relationships with communities, knowledge of local hazard, risk and the local environment, ability to mobilise local resources, and experience in mitigating, responding to and recovering from emergencies.*



## 1.2 Framework purpose

The Local Government Emergency Management Framework exists to provide clarity and direction to the local government sector in South Australia with regard to emergency management. The aims of the framework are to:

1. Outline a holistic and integrated approach to emergency management for local government that encompasses actions taken before, during and after emergencies;
2. Provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of local government in emergency management as a foundation for all emergency management strategies, programs and activities across the local government sector; and
3. Communicate the ways in which local government emergency management is integrated with state, national and international emergency management arrangements and policy.

It is intended that this framework will guide the emergency management plans, strategies, activities and programs of councils, the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA-SA), regional LGAs, the Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG) and LGASA Mutual.

## 1.3 Framework overview

The framework has four sections:

**Section 1** introduces the framework by providing background information, describing its purpose and defining key terms.

**Section 2** provides the context for the framework by explaining the drivers for local government emergency management in South Australia.

**Section 3** contains the key elements of the framework, including a vision, scope, guiding principles, and clarification of roles and strategic objectives for the key areas of:

- Disaster risk reduction
- Incident operations
- Recovery.

**Section 4** details how the framework will be implemented, with roles described for the councils, the LGA, regional LGAs, the LGFSG and LGASA Mutual. Section 4 also introduces the guidelines, tools and templates available to support councils with emergency management planning.



## 1.4 Definitions

The following definitions are provided for the purposes of this framework, and to establish a common language for local government emergency management in South Australia. Throughout this framework, the verbs ‘lead’, ‘support’ and ‘coordinate’ are used in their commonly understood dictionary meanings, and not the meanings specific to emergency management terminology.

### Community

A social group with a commonality of association and generally defined by location, shared experience or function, and with a number of things in common such as culture, heritage, language, ethnicity, pastimes, occupation or workplace<sup>1</sup>.

### Disaster resilience

The ability to survive, adapt and grow, no matter what happens<sup>2</sup>.

### Disaster risk

The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society or a community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity<sup>3</sup>.

### Disaster risk reduction

Activity aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development<sup>4</sup>.

### Emergency

An event (whether occurring in the State, outside the State or in and outside the State) that causes, or threatens to cause—

- (a) the death of, or injury or other damage to the health of, any person; or
- (b) the destruction of, or damage to, any property; or
- (c) a disruption to essential services or to services usually enjoyed by the community; or
- (d) harm to the environment, or to flora or fauna;

Note— This is not limited to naturally occurring events (such as earthquakes, floods or storms) but would, for example, include fires, explosions, accidents, epidemics, pandemics, emissions of poisons, radiation or other hazardous agents, hijacks, sieges, riots, acts of terrorism and hostilities directed by an enemy against Australia<sup>5</sup>.

### Emergency management

A range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment.

More specifically, the organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies, encompassing, plans, structures and arrangements which are established to bring together the normal endeavours of government, voluntary and private agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the whole spectrum of emergency needs including prevention, response and recovery<sup>6</sup>.

### Incident management

Processes, decisions and actions taken to resolve an emergency incident and support recovery that will enable the community to return to normality<sup>7</sup>.

### Local government organisations

The Local Government Association of South Australia, the 68 councils across South Australia, the 6 Regional Local Government Associations (regional LGAs) and other Local Government subsidiaries.<sup>8</sup>

### Recovery

The coordinated process of supporting emergency-affected communities in reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical well-being<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/national-disaster-risk-reduction-framework.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> South Australia's Disaster Resilience Strategy 2019-2024

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction  
<https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction  
<https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

<sup>5</sup> South Australian Emergency Management Act 2004

<sup>6</sup> Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Glossary,  
<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/glossary/>

<sup>7</sup> Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Glossary,  
<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/glossary/>

<sup>8</sup> Local Government Functional Support Group Plan, V1.1

<sup>9</sup> Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Glossary,  
<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/glossary/>

## 2. Drivers for local emergency management

### 2.1 Updated framework responds to emerging drivers

The first iteration of the Local Government Emergency Management Framework was finalised in 2017. The current update was initiated to:

- Incorporate what the LGA has learnt from extensive engagement with councils through the Council Ready program;<sup>10</sup>
- Articulate the local government response to a number of international, national, state and local policy directives (see Figure 2.1); and
- Reflect operational changes associated with the ongoing evolution of the South Australian emergency management arrangements and the maturing of the LGFSG.

**Figure 2.1: A non-exhaustive summary of frameworks, strategies and policies that provide the context for this framework**



<sup>10</sup> Council Ready is a three year program funded by the Natural Disaster Resilience Program and the LGA Mutual Liability Scheme that aims to support councils with emergency management planning.



## 2.2 Strategic drivers

### Climate risk

Our climate is changing. Extreme events such as bushfires, storms, heatwaves and floods are predicted to increase in frequency, duration and intensity as a result of climate change. Some extreme weather events are already happening at an increased frequency.

New natural hazard threats will emerge as a result of climate change and there is risk of hazards in areas that previously have not experienced them.

There is increasing potential for concurrent emergencies to occur, for example, flooding events or bushfires following a prolonged drought.

We can also expect emergencies to occur in closer succession, and greater complexity through cascading events that trigger unforeseen consequences on communities.

The impacts of climate change mean that councils will need to support communities affected by emergencies more often. It will also necessitate a stronger focus on resilience, so that communities can survive, adapt and grow through the experience of emergencies.

The more frequent and changing experience of emergencies will impact the local government sector's ability to achieve its strategic goals. This will drive local government organisations to proactively identify and mitigate their climate risks, many of which are also emergency risks. Practically, this will require councils to apply climate and hazard data to better manage assets, plan community land use and manage risks.

*"...there is an accepted understanding that disasters and disaster risk are influenced not only by physical risk, but also by the way government systems operate and social action, inaction and organisation. The changing climate – affecting ageing populations, work patterns, land use changes, migration to and from rural areas and volunteering trends – creates increased challenges in managing disaster risk"*

*-AFAC 2018. Climate Change and the Emergency Management Sector*



## An era of change

South Australian communities are continuing to experience changes brought about by population ageing, globalisation, inequality, urban development, technological advancements, economic restructuring, health and a growing interconnectivity between the critical systems that support our communities.

These changes present challenges for emergency management. For example, population growth may expose more people to emergency risks as neighbourhoods establish in areas at risk of fires, floods or coastal inundation.

Changes to the systems on which communities depend, for example, food, energy, communications and transport systems, now mean that the failure of one system has far wider consequences than ever before. Acts of violent extremism may also target these systems with cascading impacts on communities.

## Growing costs of disasters

Emergencies are associated with increasing financial and human costs to communities, businesses and the local government sector.

In 2017 Deloitte Access Economics found that over the past 10 years, disasters have cost the South Australian economy around \$200 million per year. Assuming current development patterns and population growth continue, this is forecast to reach \$700 million per year by 2050<sup>11</sup>. This forecast does not account for the effects of a changing climate, which are expected to magnify these costs, nor does it account for losses that cannot be quantified but are no less important to people.

*The growing costs of disasters will drive a stronger focus on proactive emergency risk management, and see disaster risk a bigger consideration in decision making.*

*This will be necessary to reduce the financial risks to the sector and ensure the sector continues to enjoy the protections and insurance that ratepayers expect.*

Through risk assessments, long term strategies and everyday business, councils know where investment is needed to mitigate emergency risks, for example through stormwater management, coastal protection, flood protection, or climate change adaptation. Councils have an important role in sharing information they hold about emergency risks, as this can help strengthen the resilience of communities, strengthen partnerships with other levels of government, prompt private sector investment and avoid higher insurance premiums.

## Strengthening community resilience

As the level of government closest to communities, local government has a unique understanding of the needs and aspirations of South Australian communities. Councils are well placed to work with individuals, households, community groups and businesses to strengthen resilience to emergencies. Council volunteers are an important resource to be mobilised in doing so.

A high level of community satisfaction and trust in local government means that when emergencies occur, councils are a trusted source of information and support. While this trust and connection is a strength, it also comes with an expectation that councils are ready to support communities during and after emergencies.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/economics/articles/building-australias-natural-disaster-resilience.html>



It is also important to note that councils are not the only organisations with strong pathways into communities. Communities will fare better through the experience of emergencies if organisations across the community work together to strengthen disaster resilience.

## Playing our part

Emergency management is a shared responsibility.

Playing our part means that local government is proactively contributing to emergency management, and doing so in a coordinated way that is well integrated with local, regional and state arrangements. It also requires councils to work closely with individuals, households, communities and businesses.

In an era of increasing cost and role shifting to local government, it is important that the sector does not assume roles that are best managed by other levels of government, the private sector or community. Local government activities in emergency management will be most successful when they draw upon the sector's core strengths and add value to what is core business for councils.

*"There is a need for a new focus on shared responsibility; one where political leaders, governments, business and community leaders, and the not-for-profit sector all adopt increased or improved emergency management and advisory roles, and contribute to achieving integrated and coordinated disaster resilience. In turn, communities, individuals and households need to take greater responsibility for their own safety and act on information, advice and other cues".*

- *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*



## 2.3 Legislative drivers

Table 2.1 summarises the key legislative drivers for local government's involvement in emergency management.

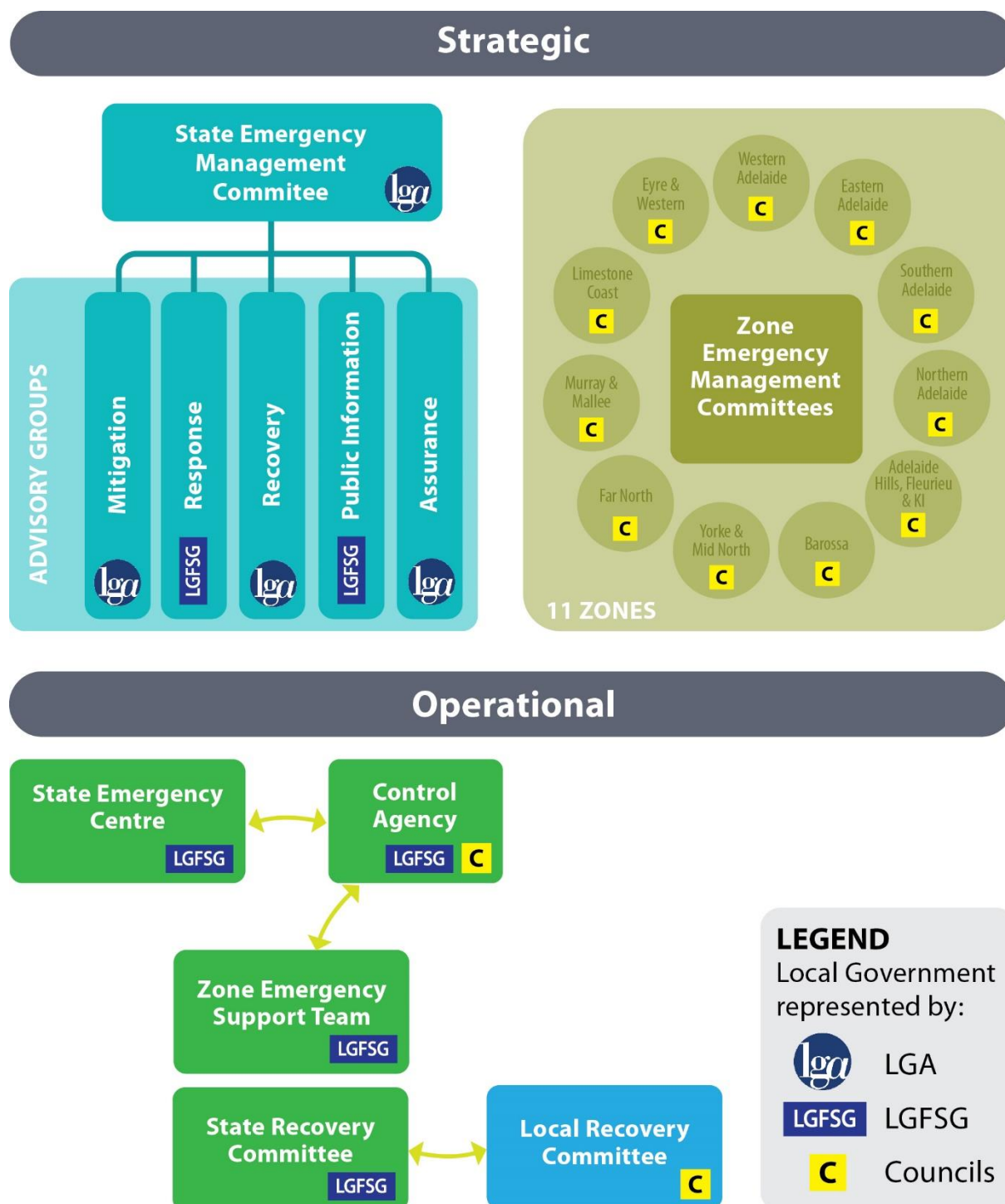
**Table 2.1: Overview of relevant legislation**

Legislation	Relevance to local government emergency management
<i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i>	<p>The Local Government Act 1999 outlines responsibilities for councils to consider risks (including emergency risks) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make informed decisions (section 6);</li> <li>• take measures to protect their area from natural hazards (section 7);</li> <li>• provide infrastructure for community and for development (section 7);</li> <li>• ensure the sustainability of the council's long-term financial performance (section 8);</li> <li>• assess the maintenance, replacement or development needs for infrastructure (section 122);</li> <li>• identify anticipated or predicted changes in any factors that make a significant contribution to the costs of the council's activities or operations (section 122).</li> </ul> <p>In addition, councils must "give due weight, in all its plans, policies and activities to regional, state and national objectives and strategies concerning the economic, social, physical and environmental development and management of the community" (section 8).</p>
<i>Emergency Management Act 2004 (SA)</i>	<p>Outlines the state's strategies and systems for emergency management including direct references to local government.</p> <p>Provides the power for the creation of the State Emergency Management Committee and the State Emergency Management Plan.</p>
<i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA)</i>	<p>Provides the head power for the State Bushfire Coordination Committee, Bushfire Management Areas, Bushfire Management Committee and Bushfire Management Area Plans.</p>
<i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (SA)</i>	<p>Establishes land use planning and development control systems, and the role of local government in these systems.</p>
<i>SA Public Health Act 2011 (SA)</i>	<p>Establishes councils are public health authorities, including preventative and response roles for environmental health officers.</p> <p>Requires councils to prepare Regional Public Health Plans.</p>
<i>Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (SA)</i>	<p>Establishes the State's natural resources management regions and boards to guide the use and management of natural resources.</p>
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)</i>	<p>Establishes systems to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces.</p>
<i>Environment Protection Act 1993 (SA)</i>	<p>Establishes a system to protect the environment, including establishment of the Environment Protection Authority. Under section 87, details the powers of an authorised officer under this Act which allows them to take action to protect the environment which may arise in the case of an emergency (such as a hazardous waste spill).</p>

## 2.4 South Australian emergency management arrangements

Given this strategic and legislative context, it is important that the local government sector is well integrated into the South Australian emergency management arrangements, which are detailed in the State Emergency Management Plan<sup>12</sup>. The points of connection between local government organisations and these arrangements is shown in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2. Local government involvement in the SA emergency management arrangements.**



<sup>12</sup> <https://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/security-and-emergency-management/state-emergency-management-plan>

At the strategic level, the LGA is a member of the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) and associated advisory groups. This provides a mechanism for the voice of local government to be heard on bodies which have strategic oversight of emergency management in South Australia.

Councils are represented on the eleven Zone Emergency Management Committees (ZEMCs) across the state (refer to Appendix A for a map of emergency management zones). ZEMCs are responsible for strategic zone level emergency management planning, including maintenance of the zone emergency risk assessments and zone emergency management plans. In many cases, the chair is a local government representative. The roles of a ZEMC include:

- Working within the Zone Emergency Risk Management Framework to identify, analyse and evaluate emergency risks that could impact the Zone;
- Identifying and evaluating treatment options and developing a Zone Emergency Management Plan (ZEMP) to address residual risk; and
- Providing assurance that arrangements are in place to prevent and/or mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies; the aim being to create safer and more resilient communities within the Zone<sup>13</sup>.

During incidents, local government plays a support role to the Control Agencies, Functional Support Groups and Support Agencies who have prescribed roles in the State Emergency Management Plan.

There are two categories that describe how local government participates in the South Australian emergency management arrangements (see Figure 2.3). For 'council category' incidents, that is, incidents involving only one council, councils typically provide direct support to the control agency and other involved parties working through locally developed arrangements and networks.

For 'local government category' incidents, that is, for incidents involving more than one council or are more complex, the LGFSG coordinates the response from local government. This includes:

- Ensuring effective coordination and communication between impacted councils;
- Ensuring effective coordination and communication between emergency services and impacted councils;
- Facilitating resource sharing across the local government sector; and
- Representing the local government sector at the State Emergency Centre, Agency State Control Centres, Zone Emergency Support Teams and any relevant agency Incident Management Teams.

**Figure 2.3. Definitions of 'Council Category' and 'Local Government category' incidents<sup>14</sup>.**

LGFSG Incident Category	Criteria	LGFSG Activity	Council Activity
<b>Council</b>	1 x Council Involved <i>Single Council Only Within Capacity</i>	SDO Available to Support Council	Appoint Council Commander Keep SDO Informed
<b>Local Government</b>	Local Government Sector Involved <i>Multiple Councils Involved Activation of SEC and/or SEC</i>	Coordinate operations of Local Government	Providing support within capability and capacity

<sup>13</sup> Zone Emergency Management Committee Induction Manual, Version 2.0, prepared by Zone Emergency Risk Management Team, South Australian State Emergency Services, p 21

<sup>14</sup> Local Government Functional Support Group Plan V1.1



During recovery, local government is represented on the State Recovery Committee by the LGFSG, and on Local Recovery Committees by impacted councils. The State Recovery Committee coordinates whole of government recovery activities across the state, while the Local Recovery Committee is responsible for coordinating local recovery activities after an incident. It is not uncommon for a senior council representative to chair a Local Recovery Committee.



## 3. Local Government Emergency Management Framework

The Local Government Emergency Management Framework comprises a vision, scope, guiding principles, and strategic objectives for the key areas of disaster risk reduction, incident operations and recovery.

### 3.1 Vision

Communities are disaster resilient because emergency risks are understood across the community, mitigated wherever possible, and there are effective systems to ensure community safety and wellbeing when emergencies occur.

### 3.2 Scope

This framework relates to all emergency events, regardless of size, frequency and speed of onset, which may be caused by natural or human-induced hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards. The framework is structured around the key areas of

- Disaster risk reduction - action to avoid the creation of new disaster risks, reducing existing disaster risks, and managing any residual risk;
- Incident operations - actions undertaken, immediately before, during and immediately after an incident; and
- Recovery - the process of restoring emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing, reconstructing physical infrastructure and restoring the environment following an emergency.



The relationship between these key areas and the traditional Prevention-Preparedness-Response-Recovery model are shown in Figure 3.1

**Figure 3.1. PPRR in the local government emergency management framework**

	Disaster risk reduction	Incident operations	Recovery
Prevention			
Preparedness			
Response			
Recovery			

### 3.3 Guiding principles

The following principles underpin this framework:

<b>Holistic</b>	Local government is a holistic contributor to emergency management and considers the wide range of possible consequences of emergencies on communities.
<b>Everyday strengths</b>	Local government's emergency management roles draw on the sector's core strengths in communities and add value to what is usual business for councils.
<b>Local knowledge</b>	Local government holds and shares information about local communities, risks and vulnerabilities to strengthen local emergency management.
<b>Clear governance</b>	Local government participates in emergency management in a coordinated way with clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
<b>United</b>	Local government collaborates in emergency management as a single sector, sharing knowledge, resources and expertise, thereby mitigating variations in council size, risk exposure and capacity.
<b>Evidence-based</b>	Local government emergency management is risk informed, and draws together data from all sectors, lived experiences, emerging risks and community aspirations.
<b>Learning</b>	Local government is continually improving emergency management practices and adapting to emerging risks, so that efficacy of our approaches is improved and the overall cost and impacts of emergencies is reduced.

## 3.4 Key area one: Disaster risk reduction

### Clarifying our role: disaster risk reduction for local government

Disaster risk reduction is the practice of intentionally taking action to avoid the creation of new disaster risks, reducing existing disaster risks, and managing any residual risk. Effective disaster risk reduction minimises the need to respond to and recover from emergencies.

The terms “disaster risk reduction”, “mitigation” or “prevention” are sometimes used interchangeably. Prevention measures seek to eliminate the impact of hazards, and/or reduce susceptibility to them. Mitigation measures accept that the event will occur and seek to reduce the impact by both physical means (e.g. flood levees) and by increasing the resilience of the community exposed to the impact of those hazards. Prevention and mitigation are both part of disaster risk reduction.

In 2018, consultation with South Australian councils through the Council Ready program found that:

- Mitigation of emergency risk is arguably councils’ biggest contribution to emergency management
- Activities councils undertake to mitigate emergency risks largely occur through business-as-usual activities and are rarely explicitly communicated as part of councils’ emergency management arrangements
- There are strong strategic links between emergency management and public health, climate change adaptation, asset management and community wellbeing
- There is no quantification or reporting at the council or local government sector level about the significant investment that councils are making to disaster risk reduction<sup>15</sup>.

In South Australia, the State Emergency Management Plan has assigned ten ‘hazard leaders’ who are responsible for leading action to mitigate risks associated with priority hazards. Councils work in partnership with hazard leaders on a range of measures aimed at managing these hazards.

However, councils are not limited to the ten priority state hazards, and undertake a range of measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards. These often occur through business-as-usual activities, as demonstrated in Figure 3.2.

While local government in South Australia makes a significant contribution to disaster risk reduction, it is often as a by-product of another strategic priority, rather than an intentional activity. Examples include the development and implementation of risk registers, asset management plans and other strategic planning processes.

Given the increasing emergency risks that communities are facing and the policy imperative around disaster risk reduction, there is scope for councils to provide a more focussed consideration of how they are contributing to disaster risk reduction.

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<sup>15</sup> LGASA Emergency Management Health Checks with SA Councils: Summary Report, Page 22-23



**Figure 3.2: Examples of councils' contribution to disaster risk reduction.**



## **Clarifying our direction: Strategic objectives for disaster risk reduction**

The following strategic objectives articulate local government's commitment and priorities in the area of disaster risk reduction. It is intended that these strategic objectives will be adopted by local government organisations in the implementation of this framework (see Section 4).

### ***Strategic objectives***

1. Improve the local government sector's understanding of current and emerging disaster risks, and the consequences of these on communities, and share this information with our partners
2. Integrate disaster risk information into local government planning and decision-making;
3. Advocate for investment in actions that reduce disaster risks and strengthen community resilience;
4. Seek to reduce disaster risks within the control and capacity of local government organisations.



## 3.5 Key area two: Incident operations

### Clarifying our role: Incident operations for local government

Incident operations refers to actions undertaken by the local government sector immediately before, during and immediately after an emergency incident. In incident operations, councils typically take action to provide support:

- To their community
- To other councils
- To the control agency and other involved parties through the South Australian emergency management arrangements.

Examples actions that councils take in incident operations are shown in Figure 3.3.

In 2018, consultation with South Australian councils through the Council Ready program found that:

- Each council currently has its own approach to incident operations
- Emergency management documentation needs to speak to different audiences including community, elected members, executive, operational managers and frontline staff
- There is stronger knowledge of frequently experienced hazards, such as bushfires or extreme weather, compared with less well understood or emerging hazards such as extreme heat or violent extremism
- Reliance on key individuals who hold considerable knowledge and expertise is a consistent challenge<sup>16</sup>.

For councils, preparing to participate in incident operations begins with ensuring the routine systems are effectively working. These include business continuity plans (including IT recovery), work health and safety systems and internal arrangements for managing crisis communications. This is because without staff being safe and supported, council's assets maintained and basic business disruptions being managed, local government is unable to provide broader assistance to the community.

The next step is ensuring appropriate incident operations arrangements are in place.

In developing incident operational arrangements, councils are encouraged to draw upon and reinforce existing policies, procedures and systems wherever possible and appropriate. When developing policies and procedures that explicitly address incident operations, it is important that their relationship with existing processes (e.g. routine call-out arrangements, internal communication protocols) is clearly communicated.

In developing operational arrangements, councils can draw upon best practice incident management systems used in the emergency management sector. These typically include common terminology, a scalable incident action planning process and organisational structures to match the size, impact and complexity of the incident.

Councils' incident operational arrangements should consider the i-Responda operating platform. i-Responda provides a standardised framework and set of actions for all South Australian councils to work under while providing support to emergency services during incident operations.

It is also important that councils' incident operational arrangements clearly outline how the council can integrate with the LGFSG. The LGFSG is established under the SEMP and is responsible for coordinating the response from local government during an emergency. The point of connection between individual councils and the LGFSG during an incident is the Council Commander.

<sup>16</sup> LGASA Emergency Management Health Checks with SA Councils: Summary Report, Page 28-29.

**Figure 3.3: Examples of councils' contribution to incident operations.**



While councils are responsible for ensuring they have appropriate incident operational arrangements for their council, the LGA is responsible for ensuring the preparedness of the sector to participate as the LGFSG. This happens through:

- Maintenance of the LGFSG Operating Platform, which is made up of the LGFSG Plan, Operations Manual and Joint Operating Guidelines
- Representing the local government sector in state level committees and structures
- Delivery of the Local Government Emergency Management Development Program, which provides training and capability development in emergency management across the local government sector.

### **Clarifying our direction: Strategic objectives for incident operations**

The following strategic objectives articulate local government's commitment and priorities in the area of incident operations. It is intended that these strategic objectives will be adopted by local government organisations in the implementation of this framework (see Section 4).

#### ***Strategic objectives***

1. Develop incident operational arrangements that allow councils to support their community, other councils and the state emergency management arrangements;
2. Adopt consistent terminology and approaches to incident operations across the local government sector
3. Develop capability of local government organisations to participate as a united local government sector as members of the LGFSG.

## 3.6 Key area three: Recovery

### Clarifying our role: Recovery for local government

Recovery is the process of restoring emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing, reconstructing physical infrastructure and restoring the environment following an emergency. Depending on the scale of the disaster, recovery can continue for weeks, months or even years, as people and communities rebuild and restore their lives.

In 2018, consultation with South Australian councils through the Council Ready program found that:

- There is a lack of clarity about the roles of local government in recovery
- Experience has demonstrated how recovery disrupts business-as-usual in almost every part of councils.
- The long term nature of recovery can lead to organisational fatigue as staff sustain high workloads over an extended period.
- There are inherent connections between the sorts of activities that councils undertake in recovery and what they do in disaster risk reduction. Community development, asset management, leadership and advocacy are but four examples of this<sup>17</sup>.

There are four domains of recovery which are nationally recognised and reflected in South Australia's emergency management arrangements:

1. **Infrastructure and built** – public and commercial buildings, roads, paths, essential services (power, water, communications) and other infrastructure
2. **Social** – people, families and communities
3. **Economic** – employers, industry, investment and job creation
4. **Natural** – land management, air quality, natural heritage, culture, history and ecological conservation.

Councils are involved in all four domains of recovery, and after a major emergency, recovery becomes a 'whole of council' concern that impacts upon all aspects of the organisation. Examples of the sorts of activities that councils might provide in recovery are shown in Figure 3.4.

As an example of this, the *Disaster Recovery Guide for Councils* identifies potential activities for councils in recovery for functional areas of waste management, infrastructure, planning and development, wastewater, stormwater management, environmental health, natural environment, animal management, vulnerable residents, community information and engagement, community development and financial support.

#### **National principles for disaster recovery**

##### **Understand the context**

Successful recovery is based on understanding community context, with each community having its own history, values and dynamics.

##### **Recognise complexity**

Successful recovery is responsive to the complex and dynamic nature of both emergencies and the community.

##### **Use community-led approaches**

Successful recovery is community-centred, responsive and flexible, engaging with community and supporting them to move forward.

##### **Coordinate all activities**

Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach, between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.

##### **Communicate effectively**

Successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.

##### **Recognise and build capacity**

Successful recovery recognises, supports, and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.

<sup>17</sup> LGASA Emergency Management Health Checks with SA Councils: Summary Report, Page 28-29.



**Figure 3.4: Examples of councils' contribution to recovery.**



It is important to recognise that councils do not undertake recovery alone, and it is a shared effort between the affected communities, all levels of government and the not-for-profit and private sectors. In South Australia, the State Recovery Office in the Department of Human Services provides coordination and support to all involved parties.

Recovery can be a complex and demanding process for councils, involving a broad range of stakeholders and often exposing challenging issues to be negotiated. Usual processes and practices may not work in the recovery environment, and council staff and volunteers will need to be flexible and adaptable when responding to changing community needs. In addition, workforce management is critical as staff and volunteers may be impacted themselves, impacting their ability to support recovery activities.

It is important that recovery activities strengthen community resilience and contribute to disaster risk reduction through the adoption of betterment or 'build back better' approaches.

To provide the most effective support to communities and minimise duplication of effort, recovery must be well planned and coordinated.

In many cases, a Local Recovery Committee is established as the key mechanism for coordinating recovery efforts between stakeholders at the local level. As the level of government closest to affected communities, councils are critical to the effective coordination of recovery efforts in these committees, and are often asked to chair the committee.

### **Clarifying our direction: Strategic objectives for recovery**

The following strategic objectives outline the local government's commitment and priorities in the area of recovery. It is intended that these strategic objectives will be adopted by local government organisations in the implementation of this framework (see Section 4).

#### ***Strategic objectives***

1. Participate in recovery in a coordinated way that meets community needs and avoids duplication of efforts;
2. Consider the broad impacts that recovery will have upon local government organisations, across infrastructural, social, economic and natural systems in local communities;
3. Plan for recovery in ways that establish the principles, structures, partnerships and approaches to guide the delivery of recovery activities.



## 4. Implementation

The following sections outline roles for councils, the LGA, regional LGAs, the LGFSG and LGASA Mutual in this framework, details the tools and supports available to assist implementation, and identifies approaches for monitoring progress.

### 4.1 Roles for councils

As a key driver of local emergency management, councils have direct roles in disaster risk reduction, incident operations and recovery, as summarised in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Roles for councils in this framework.**

Disaster risk reduction	Incident operations	Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand and communicate current and emerging disaster risks for council and the community</li> <li>Integrate disaster risk into existing plans and decision-making (e.g. strategic plans, risk frameworks, asset management plan, climate change plans)</li> <li>Partner with local stakeholders in addressing priority emergency risks</li> <li>Strengthen disaster resilience in communities through community development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a locally relevant risk-based suite of incident operations arrangements.</li> <li>Build capability of council to participate in the LGFSG</li> <li>Participate in incident operations in accordance with the i-Responda operating platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide leadership, coordination and advocacy when the community is impacted by disasters</li> <li>Plan for recovery to establish the principles, structures, partnerships and approaches that will guide council</li> <li>Secure grants and other funding assistance to support disaster recovery</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Roles for the LGA

The LGA supports councils to undertake their roles and responsibilities through advocacy, guidance and practical assistance. The LGA also represents local government on state-level committees and working groups. Table 4.2 summarises the key roles of the LGA in disaster risk reduction, incident operations and recovery.

**Table 4.2: Roles for the LGA in this framework.**

Disaster risk reduction	Incident operations	Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with hazard leaders, control agencies and other stakeholders to understand and communicate current and emerging disaster risks</li> <li>• Support councils with tools to help integrate disaster risk into council planning and decision making</li> <li>• Advocate and partner to drive greater focus and investment on disaster risk reduction</li> <li>• Contribute to state-wide planning and preparedness as member of state level committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the LGFSG coordinates the response from Local Government and operates as required by the State Emergency Management Plan</li> <li>• Maintain the i-Responda operating platform</li> <li>• Maintain the Local Government Emergency Management Development Program</li> <li>• Contribute to state-wide planning and preparedness as member of state level committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide leadership, coordination and advocacy across the local government sector in recovery</li> <li>• Contribute to state-wide planning and preparedness for recovery as member of state level committees</li> </ul>

## 4.3 Roles for regional LGAs

Regional LGAs provide leadership, advocacy and coordination roles, which are especially important to disaster risk reduction and recovery. They also support incident operations as a member of the LGFSG, subject to their capacity. Examples of roles are outlined in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Roles for regional LGAs in this framework.**

Disaster risk reduction	Incident operations	Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand and communicate current and emerging disaster risks across the region</li> <li>Use regional projects as an opportunity to support the integration of disaster risk into council planning and decision making</li> <li>Advocacy to help drive greater investment and focus upon disaster risk reduction within the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate as a member of the LGFSG, as resourcing allows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide regional leadership, coordination and advocacy as required</li> </ul>

## 4.4 Roles for the LGFSG

The LGFSG exists to coordinate the local government response during an emergency. As shown in Table 4.4, this translates predominantly to roles in incident operations and recovery.

**Table 4.4: Roles for the LGFSG in this framework.**

Disaster risk reduction	Incident operations	Recovery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate the local government response during emergencies</li> <li>Ensure local government organisations are equipped to participate in the LGFSG</li> <li>Facilitate exercising and lessons management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support councils in understanding the disaster recovery arrangements for SA</li> <li>Support councils in recovery coordination as required</li> </ul>

## 4.5 Roles for LGASA Mutual

LGASA Mutual P/L via the LGA Mutual Liability Scheme and LGA Workers Compensation Scheme provide a range of services that assist councils with meeting their emergency management responsibilities through assistance with identifying and managing strategic and operational risks.

Some of these services are delivered on an ongoing bases while others are funded from the schemes' development fund for one-off projects. The schemes provide emergency management risk services, workers compensation services and coverage as part of the everyday activities and service provision to councils. These roles exist across the emergency management spectrum, as shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Roles for LGASA Mutual in this framework.**

Disaster risk reduction	Incident operations	Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support councils to consider current and emergency risks as part of their strategic risk management, and general risk management</li> <li>Undertake new initiatives as required to support local government sector to proactively management current and emerging disaster risk</li> <li>Incentivise councils who are proactively managing their current and emerging disaster risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure appropriate coverage arrangements are in place to enable local government organisations to participate in incident operations</li> <li>Support councils to implement i-Responda to ensure appropriate risk management in incident operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide assistance to local government organisations through claims management</li> </ul>

## 4.6 Support resources

This framework is supported by a range of tools, guidelines and resources which provide guidance to councils in fulfilling their emergency management responsibilities. Figure 4.1 summarises the relationship between this framework and council emergency management documents for which guidance materials are available:

**Figure 4.1: Connection between this framework and council documents**

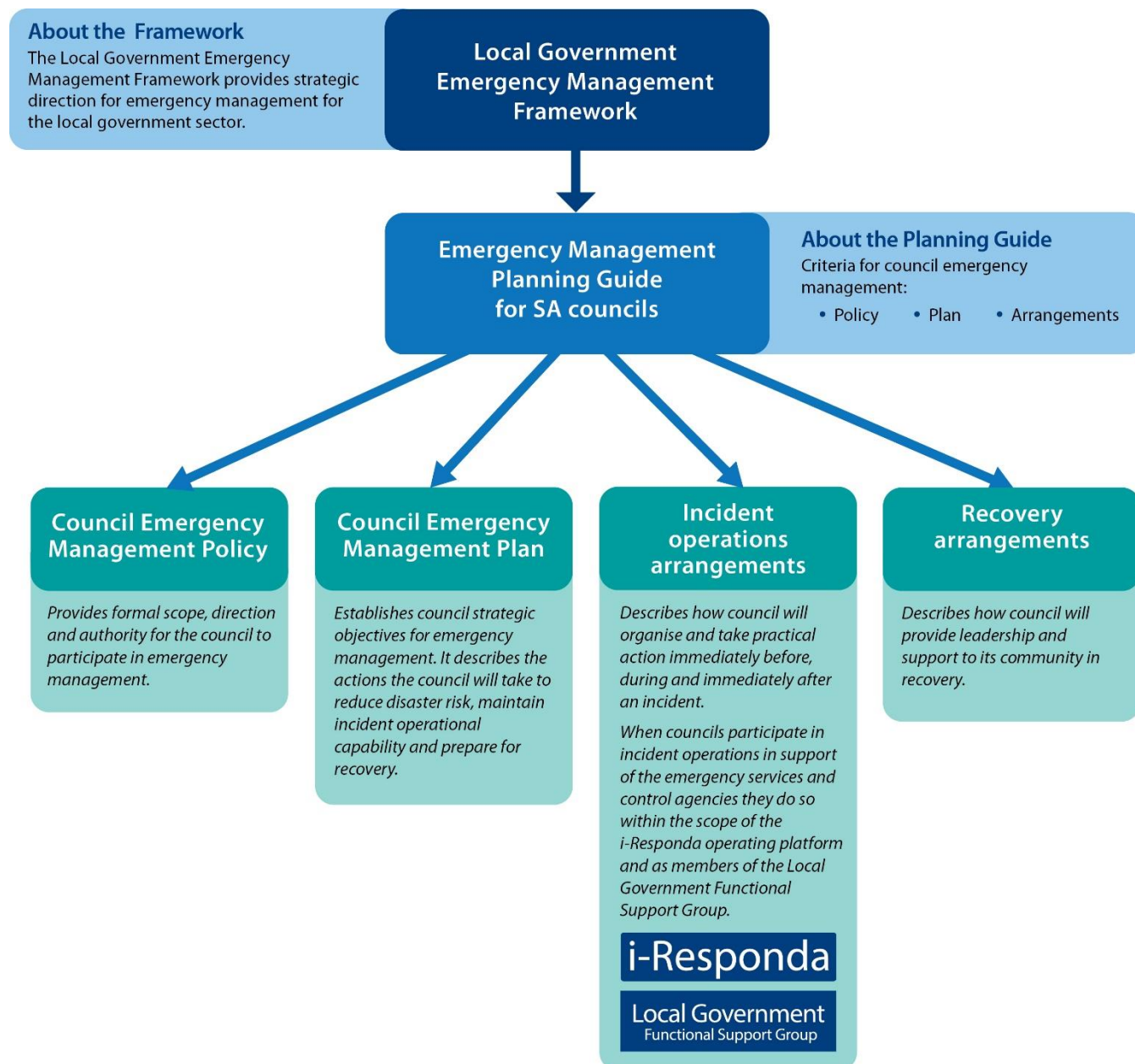


Table 4.6 summarises the guides and templates available on the LGA Emergency Management Knowledge Hub<sup>18</sup>. Additional resources are available through the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/emergencymanagementhub>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.aidr.org.au/>

**Table 4.6: LGA support resources in emergency management**

Guides	Templates
<p>Emergency management planning guide for SA councils (LGA)</p> <p>Local government incident operations guide (LGFSG)</p> <p>Protection guide for incident operations (LGASA Mutual)</p> <p>Emergency risk management guide for SA councils (LGA)</p> <p>Disaster recovery guide for SA councils (LGA)</p> <p>Extreme heat guide for local government in South Australia (LGA)</p> <p>Social media in emergencies guide (LGA)</p> <p>Emergency management guide for elected members (LGA)</p>	<p>Council emergency management policy</p> <p>Council emergency management plan</p> <p>Council incident operations arrangements</p> <p>Council recovery arrangements</p> <p>Council emergency risk assessment template and risk register tool</p>

## 4.7 Monitoring and review

The LGA has responsibility for monitoring progress in the implementation of this framework. The LGA will facilitate an annual review of progress towards the strategic objectives identified in the framework.

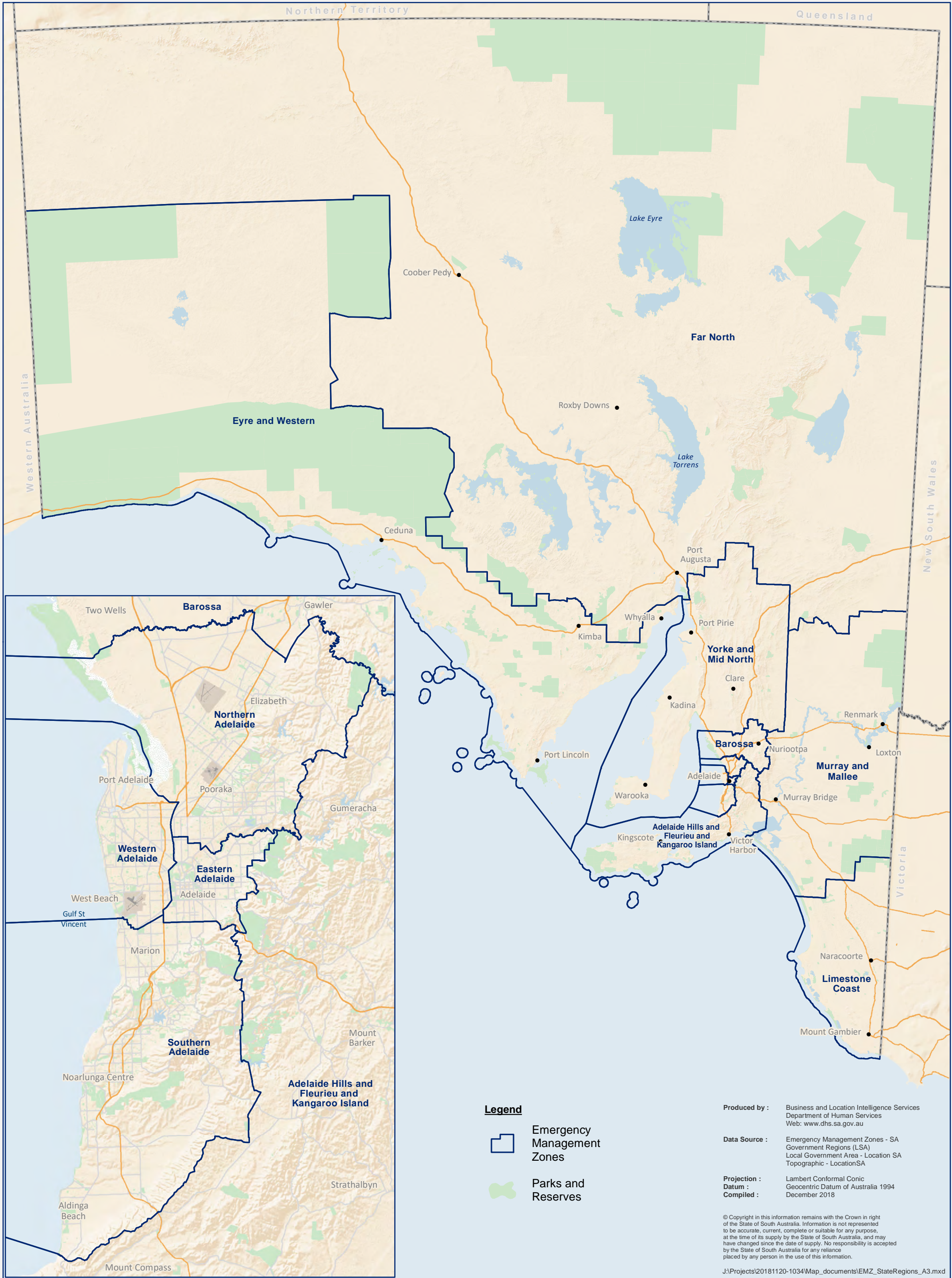
This framework will be reviewed as required, and no later than in five years' time (2024).



## Appendix A: Emergency management zones



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