

NEW SOUTH WALES

PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES

FUNCTIONAL AREA SUPPORTING

PLAN



**A FUNCTIONAL AREA SUPPORTING PLAN OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES
STATE DISASTER PLAN (DISPLAN)**

AUTHORISATION

The New South Wales State Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan has been prepared as a Supporting Plan to the New South Wales State Disaster Plan (Displan), to co-ordinate media resources, to provide for the controlled release of public safety and/or warning messages and public information, and to co-ordinate the interaction between all media agencies during emergency operations.

This Supporting Plan is authorised in accordance with the provisions of the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act, 1989 (as amended).

Endorsed

.....
Chairman
State Emergency Management Committee

AMENDMENT LIST

1. Proposals for amendment or addition to the contents of the Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan are to be forwarded to:

The Secretary
NSW State Emergency Management Committee
P.O Box A792
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235

Email: semc@oes.nsw.gov.au

2. Amendments promulgated are to be entered in the undermentioned table when entered.

| Amendment | | Entered | |
|------------------|----------------|-----------|------|
| Number | Date | Signature | Date |
| Complete Rewrite | September 2000 | | |
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Definitions

Note: These definitions should be read in conjunction with those contained in the New South Wales Disaster Plan (Displan)

Agency

means a government agency or a non-government agency.[source: SERM Act]

Combat Agency

means the agency identified in Displan as the agency primarily responsible for controlling the response to a particular emergency.[source SERM Act]

Command

in this plan means the direction of members and resources of an agency / organisation in the performance of the agency / organisation's roles and tasks. Authority to command is established by legislation or by agreement with the agency / organisation. Command relates to agencies / organisations only, and operates vertically within the agency / organisation.[source: Displan]

Control

means the overall direction of the activities, agencies or individuals concerned [source: SERM Act]. Control operates horizontally across all agencies / organisations, functions and individuals. Situations are controlled.

Co-ordination

means the bringing together of agencies, organisations and individuals to ensure effective emergency or rescue management, but does not include the control of agencies, organisations and individuals by direction.[source: SERM Act]

Displan

means the New South Wales State Disaster Plan. The object of Displan is to ensure the co-ordinated response to emergencies by all agencies having responsibilities and functions in emergencies. [source: SERM Act]

District

the State is divided into such districts as the Minister may determine by order published in the Gazette. Any such order may describe the boundaries of a district by reference to Local Government Areas, maps or otherwise.[source: SERM Act]

District Emergency Operations Controller(DEOCON)

means the Region Commander of Police appointed by the Commissioner of Police, as the District Emergency Operations Controller for the Emergency Management District.

Emergency

means an emergency due to an actual or imminent occurrence (such as fire, flood, storm, earthquake, explosion, accident, epidemic or warlike action) which:

(a) endangers, or threatens to endanger, the safety or health of persons or animals in the State; or

(b) destroys or damages or threatens to destroy or damage any, property in the State; being an emergency which requires a significant and co-ordinated response.[source: SERM Act]

For the purposes of the definition of *emergency*, property in the State includes any part of the environment of the State. Accordingly, a reference in the Act to:

(a) threats or danger to property includes a reference to threats or danger to the environment, and

(b) the protection of property includes a reference to the protection of the environment.

Functional Area

means a category of services involved in preparations for an emergency, including the following:

- a. agriculture and animal services;
- b. communication services;
- d. engineering services;
- e. environmental services;
- f. health services;
- g. public information services
- h. transport services;
- i. welfare services. [source: SERM Act]

Functional Area Coordinator

in this plan means the nominated co-ordinator of the Public Information Service Functional Area, who is tasked to co-ordinate the provision of Functional Area support and resources for emergency response and initial recovery operations, who, by agreement of Participating and Supporting Organisations within the Functional Area, has the authority to commit the resources of those organisations.

Incident

in this plan means a localised event, either accidental or deliberate, which may result in death or injury, or damage to property, which requires a normal response from an agency, or agencies.

Participating Organisation

in this plan means the Government Departments, statutory authorities, volunteer organisations and other agencies who have either given formal notice to the Functional Area Co-ordinator, or have acknowledged to the State Emergency Management Committee, that they are willing to participate in emergency management response and initial recovery operations under the direction of the Controller of a combat agency, or Co-ordinator of a Functional Area, with the levels of resources or support as appropriate to the emergency operation.

Recovery

in relation to an emergency includes the process of returning an affected community to its proper level of functioning after an emergency. In this plan this refers to the ‘initial recovery’ operations to satisfy personal and community needs, and to restore services to the level where the continuing process can be managed by local government and the normal responsible agencies.

Response

in relation to an emergency includes the process of combating an emergency and of providing immediate relief for persons affected by an emergency. [source: SERM Act]

State Emergency Operations Controller (SEOCN)

means the person appointed by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister, responsible in the event of an emergency which affects more than one Emergency Management District, for controlling the allocation of resources in response to the emergency. The State Emergency Operations Controller is to establish and control a State Emergency Operations Centre. [source: SERM Act]

Supporting Organisation

in this plan means the Government Departments, statutory authorities, volunteer organisations and other specialist agencies who have indicated a willingness to participate and provide specialist support resources to the Functional Area Co-ordinator during emergency operations.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|--|
| DEOCON | District Emergency Operations Controller |
| DPIC | District Public Information Centre |
| FMC | Forward Media Centre |
| FMO | Forward Media Officer |
| JMIC | Joint Media Information Centre |
| PICC | Public Information Services Co-ordination Centre |
| PIFAC | Public Information Services Functional Area Co-ordinator |
| PIFASP | Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan |
| PMU | Police Media Unit |
| SEOC | State Emergency Operations Centre |
| SEOCON | State Emergency Operations Controller |
| SEWS | Standard Emergency Warning Signal |

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

101. The Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan (PIFASP) is a Supporting Plan of the New South Wales State Disaster Plan (Displan), developed pursuant to the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act, 1989 (as amended), and should be read in conjunction with that Plan. The Plan sets out the arrangements made by the Public Information Services Functional Area Co-ordinator (PIFAC) to coordinate public information support and media resources in the event of an emergency which is under the control of an emergency operations controller, or in the event a combat agency controller has requested and has received approval for assistance.
102. The Plan has been developed to reflect the changing needs of public information and the way in which emergency management organisations broadcast important information to the community in a timely and co-ordinated manner. **The Plan also allows for responding agencies to promote their activities during the course of any operation.**

AIM

103. The aim of this plan is to detail the arrangements for the co-ordination of the collection, collation and dissemination of public information in a multi-agency emergency which is under the control of an emergency operations controller. This includes the co-ordinated release of public safety / warning messages and public information, public education, and interaction between all media agencies during all phases of emergency operations.

SCOPE

104. The response to an emergency by a combat agency is in accordance with their Standing Operating Procedures, and is not dealt with further in the Plan, although they may seek assistance through SEOCAN for PIFAC to help with Public Information requirements.
105. During any emergency it is paramount to protect lives and property, and to:
 1. keep the community informed of what is occurring;
 2. ensure the dissemination of public information is effectively controlled and managed to limit misinformation and unnecessary distress or panic in the community;
 3. issue warnings and directions; and
 4. reassure people that all possible appropriate measures are being taken to alleviate the consequences of the event.
106. This can be achieved by cooperation between all Agency / Functional Area Public Information Staff, and the public media. All media personnel need to be aware of the information flow system, and what can be done to assist.

107. This plan does not cover non-media related public information services or warning systems such as door knocks, public address systems on site, etc. But warning of these activities might be covered in the Public Information strategy.

CONCEPT

108. The concept of the Public Information operation is to provide a co-ordinated multi-agency response of media resources to assist, as necessary:
- a. a designated combat agency at the request of the controller, during combat agency managed operations; and
 - b. Emergency Operations Controllers at all three emergency management levels during emergency response and initial recovery operations.
109. The Public Information Services Coordination Centre (PICC), which maintains “monitor” status at all times and is to coordinate the State Emergency Operations Controller’s (SEOCN) media requirements, and establish communication between participating agencies and the public media. The PICC is activated when so directed by the SEOCN, when media services / public information needs to be co-ordinated in support of an operation controlled by an emergency operations controller or at the request of a combat agency.
110. When the PICC is activated, the Public Information Services Functional Area Coordinator (PIFAC) arranges for additional media liaison resources, and coordinates the interaction between responding agencies involved and the public media.
111. The setting-up of public hotlines is the responsibility of the State Emergency Operations Centre during an emergency (when required), but the publicising of the numbers is the responsibility of the designated combat agency, and / or the Public Information Services Coordination Centre.
112. A key strategy is the establishment of a Joint Media Information Centre (JMIC). The JMIC is a process by which the resources and information of the responding agencies can be combined to meet the public information needs. The structure, roles and responsibility of the Joint Media Information Centre are addressed in this plan. A JMIC is applicable to all emergencies regardless of who is in control.

STRUCTURE

113. The structure of the Public Information Services Functional Area is:
- Public Information Services Functional Area Coordinator (PIFAC);
 - Public Information Services Coordination Centre (PICC); and
 - Joint Media Information Centres.

DISTRICT PUBLIC INFORMATION CO-ORDINATORS

114. District Public Information Services Co-ordinator (DPIC) is to be appointed to each District to provide public information support to the DEOCON and PIFAC. Their details are to be supplied to PIFAC and the Police Media Unit (PMU). PIFAC is to arrange training for the DPIC.
115. Should the DPIC or DEOCON require further Public Information assistance, this can be obtained by the DPIC requesting assistance from the PIFAC through the SEOCON.
116. District Public Information Plans are not required as the DPIC will operate within the **Aim, Scope and Concept** of the Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan. However, DPIC / DEOCON should develop SOPs which mirror the PIFASP.

PART 2 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

201. The Public Information Services Functional Area assists in emergency response and initial recovery operations by developing public information strategies. This includes coordinating the release of official and current information to the public about the emergency and about safety measures being undertaken. This is achieved with the assistance of the media by:
- a. establishing Public Information Coordination Centres;
 - b. advising Emergency Operations Controllers on public information strategies and public information needs;
 - c. arranging media conferences on behalf of the State and District Emergency Operations Controllers;
 - d. when appropriate, arranging access by representatives of the media to the area(s) affected by the emergency;
 - e. when appropriate and practicable, arranging for Joint Media Information Centres at designated locations at or near emergency locations;
 - f. preparing media releases on behalf of the State and District Emergency Operations Controllers;
 - g. preparing and issuing official announcements and directions to the public regarding warning messages, if necessary preceded by the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS);
 - h. preparing general public information and public education for broadcast by the media; and
 - i. advising the media what can be done to assist.

PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES FUNCTIONAL AREA COORDINATOR (PIFAC)

202. The Public Information Services Functional Area Co-ordinator (PIFAC) is nominated by the Police Service and approved by the Minister for Emergency Services.
203. PIFAC is responsible for managing the Public Information support to the State and District Emergency Operations Controllers, as detailed in this Plan.

PUBLIC INFORMATION COORDINATION CENTRE (PICC)

204. The State Public Information Co-ordination Centre (PICC) is located at the New South

Wales Police Service Public Affairs Branch (Media Unit), located on Level 7, Police Headquarters, the Avery Building, 14-24 College Street, Darlington 2010.

205. The roles of the PICC are to:
- a. coordinate the release of general public information on behalf of all agencies and Functional Area Coordinators;
 - b. as directed, prepare and issue official announcements, public safety messages and warnings for broadcast by the media. If necessary, these should be preceded by the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS);
 - c. monitor all media broadcasts relating to the emergency;
 - d. rectify incorrect information;
 - e. act as the primary point of contact for all media; and
 - f. establish and maintain communications / liaison with:
 - Forward Media Centre (FMC) / Joint Media Information Centres (JMIC)
 - State Emergency Operations Centre - Media Liaison Officer (SEOC-MLO);
 - Combat Agency Control Centres;
 - Functional Area Coordination Centres; and
 - District Public Information Coordinators (DPIC).
206. The Police Media Unit will provide the basis for staffing the PICC. Media Liaison Officers (MLOs) and additional support staff will be provided as directed by PIFAC from emergency service organisation's and functional areas.
207. In major or prolonged emergencies, agencies not directly involved may be required to assist by providing Media Officers or support staff to assist in staffing the PICC.
208. Each agency/Public Information Services Functional Area members should update their contact details and confirm nominees every three months. Contact details should be forwarded to PIFAC.

PICC MEDIA LIAISON OFFICERS

209. In the event that emergency services organisations and functional areas are required to provide MLOs to the PICC, they are to:

- a. prepare appropriate media / technical information statements for their respective agencies;
- b. respond to media enquiries on matters related to their respective agencies;
- c. provide the media / information communication link between their respective agencies and the PICC;
- d. keep the PICC staff informed on the activities and future intentions of their agencies; and
- e. assist and support the PIFAC to ensure a coordinated effort to meet the media and community's information needs.

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE - MEDIA LIAISON OFFICER

210. The SEOC-MLO is provided by the Police Media Unit, and is to:
- a. advise SEOCON of media related activity - ie, how the emergency is being reported overall and the likely impact it will have;
 - b. advise SEOCON on the Public Information Strategies being employed - how the strategy is going to assist in Response and initial Recovery phases;
 - c. establish and maintain communication links with the PICC;
 - d. obtain any necessary approvals for the release of information from the SEOC;
 - e. relay operational tasking directions to the PICC; and
 - f. liaise as necessary with Ministerial Media Officers, ie, Premiers Dept, Minister for Emergency Services .

AGENCY CONTROLLERS AND FUNCTIONAL AREA CO-ORDINATORS

211. Each Agency Controller and Functional Area Co-ordinator is to:
- a. develop and implement SOPs for the initial response of agency / functional area Media Liaison Officers;
 - b. ensure that the SOP reflects the roles / responsibilities of MLO in this Plan;
 - c. provide suitably trained MLO to the PICC or JMIC as required; and

- d. ensure PIFAC is provided with the current contact details of MLO to enable 24 hour access.

FORWARD MEDIA OFFICER (FMO)

- 212. When required a Forward Media Officer (FMO) will be deployed by the PIFAC, from the PICC to the area of operations. The FMO will:
 - a. provide media /information advice and media coverage feedback to the Site Controller;
 - b. provide the primary point of contact for on-site media by preparing and issuing media releases and arranging appropriate conferences;
 - c. coordinate media access to the site in accordance with the Site Controllers direction; and
 - d. maintain the public information flow to the PICC and the JMIC.
- 213. The FMO is to be provided by the Police Media Unit.
- 214. The FMO might also incorporate in Media and Public Information Strategies consideration for organisations or groups affected by the emergency. This consideration might take the form of a briefing prior to the release of information, as the result of information released may have an adverse affect on the organisations or groups involved.

JOINT MEDIA INFORMATION CENTRE

- 215. During any major multi-agency operation, regardless of whether it is controlled by a combat agency or an emergency operations controller, consideration should be given to the establishment of a Joint Media Information Centre (JMIC) near to the area of operations.
- 216. A JMIC will consist of media officers from the main participating organisations and will be under the direction of a Media Officer from the lead agency.
- 217. A JMIC will generally be located close to a designated media assembly area and will be the location to which all media representatives are directed.
- 218. When in operation the JMIC is to:
 - a. provide media representatives with timely, consistent and easy-to-understand information about the emergency response, initial recovery and mitigation operations;

- b. provide on-site spokespersons from responding agencies;
 - c. forward media inquiries to the Forward Media Officer in the forward operations centre; and
 - d. provide media representatives with times and locations of media conferences.
219. The JMIC is to reflect the team concept of operations.

MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

220. The successful management of public information requires close and effective co-operation with the media. This would include a commitment from the media to seek confirmation / clarification of public information prior to broadcast or publication. Public Information might take the form of:
- a. scheduled and controlled media releases / conferences to keep the community informed of what is occurring;
 - b. reassurance that all appropriate measures are being undertaken to mitigate the consequences of the emergency;
 - c. education information on how to save life and protect property; and / or
 - d. warnings and directions (may include the Standard Emergency Warning Signal - SEWS - as necessary).
221. For public information to be successful there has to be **co-operation with all media**.
222. When calling upon the media to assist with broadcasting/publishing public information, the media may require assistance from the Forward Media Officer (FMO), Joint Media Information Centre (JMIC) or the Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) to fulfil their commitment to report events as they occur.
223. Where practicable, every assistance should be afforded the media so they may meet their commitments, and in doing so, broadcast official and current information to the community.
224. In return, Emergency Operations Controllers might seek the use of media resources, ie helicopters, vision, regional network resources, to gain a greater appreciation of the effects of the emergency.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

225. Participating and supporting organisations are listed at ANNEX A.

PART 3 -COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

ACTIVATION

301. This plan is activated by the PIFAC when:
- a. SEOCON is required to control an emergency;
 - b. SEOCON directs its activation in support of an emergency operations controller;
and
 - c. In the event that SEOCON approves a request for assistance from a combat agency.

ALERT STAGE

302. When advised by SEOC of an *alert*, the PIFAC:
- a. warns nominated contact personnel from the Participating and Supporting Organisations that they may become involved, of the situation;
 - b. activates and staffs the PICC to watch keeping status;
 - c. identifies a Media Liaison Officer for deployment to the SEOC (sufficient MLOs to allow for 24 hours operations are to be nominated);
 - d. establishes and maintains communication links with the appropriate District Public Information Coordinator; and
 - e. collects, processes and disseminates information between the appropriate agency control centres and functional area coordination centres.

STANDBY STAGE

303. When advised *Standby*, PIFAC:
- a. warns nominated contact personnel from those Participating and Supporting Organisations that may be involved, of the changed situation and calls for Media Liaison Officers as required for the various centres;
 - b. directs the PICC to be fully staffed and operational;
 - c. deploys a MLO to the SEOC to act as the media adviser to the SEOCON, and to establish and maintain the communication links between the SEOC and the MSCC;

- d. deploys the appropriate Public Information Services resources to establish and operate a FMC(s);
- e. based on available intelligence on the event, proposes a plan of operations, including listing a priority of tasks and allocating appropriate resources;
- f. keeps Agency and Functional Areas MLO's informed; and
- g. provides initial background briefings to media. Technical details on the event are to be provided by the responsible combat agency.

CALL OUT STAGE

304. When advised of *Call Out*, PIFAC:

- a. coordinates the media resources required for assigned tasks;
- b. calls on those Participating and Supporting Organisations, involved in the emergency, to remain on 24 hour alert, and if necessary, to provide full-time MLO to the various Media Centres;
- c. ensures the MLO assigned to the SEOC is kept fully informed of the status of media resources, and the assessed capability of the media resources to sustain operations;
- d. through the SEOC-MLO, ensures that SEOCON is kept fully informed of progress and developments relating to the media during the course of the emergency;
- e. maintains direct and continuous communication links with:
 - i PICC / SEOC
 - ii PICC / FMO/JMIC and
 - iii PICC / Agency Control Centres and Functional Area Control Centres;
and
- f. maintains regular updates to the media.

STAND DOWN

305. When advised of *Stand Down*, the PIFAC:
- a. informs the Participating and Supporting Organisations of the Stand Down declaration, and of any ongoing requirements for the coordination of Media resources during initial recovery operations;
 - b. determines the degree of ongoing mobilisation of the PICC, and details for debrief of all PICC staff, including all MLOs;
 - c. makes arrangements for a formal *debrief* of all organisations involved in providing media services;
 - d. following the *debrief*, prepares a post operation report, highlighting lessons learnt, and amendments needed to media policy and / or plans;
 - e. debrief 'real' media;
 - f. performs additional tasks assigned, including State debriefing requirements; and
 - g. closes communications FMO, and advises Agencies / Functional Areas Participating and Supporting Agencies of stand down.

PART 4 - CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC INFORMATION COORDINATION CENTRE (PICC)

401. The PICC is located at:

Police Media Unit
Level 7
Police Headquarters
The Avery Building
14-24 College Street
Darlinghurst 2010

Telephone (02) 9625 4200 Facsimile (02) 9339 5630

CONTROL

402. Control of the Public Information Services Functional Area and of the PICC is vested in the nominated officer from the Police Media Unit.

NOTE: The roles and responsibilities of agencies / organisations and functional areas involved in emergency response and initial recovery operations is described in Displan. Displan also describes the inter-relationships with the operational arms within the emergency management structure, that is, combat agency, other organisations and functional areas.

COMMUNICATIONS

403. Communication links are established and maintained between all activated Emergency Operations Centres, Agency Control Centres and Functional Area Coordination Centres, and to Participating and Supporting Organisations.

PART 5 - ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

501. Administration and logistics are normally contained in the Standing Operating Procedures for Control / Coordination Centres.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEWING, TESTING, EVALUATING AND MAINTAINING THIS PLAN

502. This Plan is to be reviewed after every activation as part of the PICC debrief process outcome, and / or at least every two years.
503. Updating and improvements to media training of District Emergency Operations Controllers is to be made as necessary after each review of the Plan

ANNEX A

PARTICIPATING AND SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

Participating Organisations

NSW Police Service
NSW Agriculture
Ambulance Services of NSW
NSW Fire Brigades
Rural Fire Service
NSW State Emergency Service
Department of Community Services
Ethnic Affairs Commission
Department of Public Works and Services
Environment Protection Authority
Rail Access Corporation
NSW Health Department
Australian Red Cross (NSW Division)
Sydney Airports Corporation Limited
Premiers Department

Supporting Organisations

Australian Broadcasting Authority
Australian Broadcasting Corporations
Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations
Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters
AGL
Transgrid
Sydney Water

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