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NSW Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy Discussion Paper

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is the peak body for local government in NSW, representing all NSW general purpose councils and related entities. LGNSW facilitates the development of an effective community based system of local government in the State.

Please note that in order to meet the consultation deadline, this submission is provided in draft form in anticipation of LGNSW Board approval in February 2018. LGNSW will advise the Committee of any amendments to the submission at that time.

This submission addresses a selection of the questions posed in the discussion paper. We encourage the Office of Emergency Management to give due consideration to submissions made by individual councils and other local government organisations.

Q1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the definitions, models and systems identified for the Strategy?

The proposed new definition of an emergency is:

‘emergency means an emergency due to an actual or imminent event (such as fire, flood, storm, earthquake, explosion, terrorist act, accident, epidemic, warlike action or **a failure of, or disruption to, an essential service or infrastructure**) which endangers or threatens to endanger:

- (a) the safety or health of persons or animals within the State, or
- (b) property or the environment within the State, and which requires a significant and coordinated response.’

LGNSW supports the proposed changes to the definition of emergency to include essential services and infrastructure disruptions. This will further recognise the interdependencies of waste services and wastewater collection and treatment with critical infrastructure and community wellbeing.

Q2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the criticality assessment system for use in NSW?

The critical assessment model ranks critical infrastructure based on the significance of the impact resulting from infrastructure failure. This recognises what might be significant for a town

may not be significant for the state, and vice versa. However, how does this snapshot approach deal with the complex interdependencies and cumulative impacts? For example, several minor local failures occurring at the same time may lead to a major regional impact.

Q8. How will defining roles and responsibilities assist in providing a positive foundation for Critical Infrastructure Resilience (CIR)?

Local government's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework supports councils working with agencies, stakeholders and the community. Councils have been actively working with their communities, emergency management agencies and community service providers to develop local resilience plans.

For example, Shoalhaven City Council, in partnership with Griffith University, worked with the community of Sussex Inlet to address climate change risks facing the community. A two year process led to the creation of a vision for the area's future and a strategic action plan. This allowed the community to consider long term strategic issues and opportunities to build resilience to future impacts from natural hazards, and to engage with the various planning processes of local, state and federal governments. This process promoted the shared responsibility model. However, it should be noted shared responsibility and improved resilience can require a significant investment of time by the community, council and NSW agencies.

Q9. How can planned sector networks improve NSW CIR (e.g. using the federal Trusted Information Sharing Network sector groups and NSW emergency management committees)?

LGNSW supports stronger relationships especially at the regional and local level. The Strategy proposes that essential service providers be integrated into formal emergency management planning. This could be supported by essential service and critical infrastructure owners' participation in cross-sectoral collaboration groups.

Essential services including local water and sewerage utilities and waste collection and landfill services are necessary for human health, protection of the environment and are interconnected with other critical infrastructure services. Waste services also play a significant role in recovery operations. LGNSW recommends a state-based sectoral group on waste be created to provide an enhanced understanding of the risks to waste infrastructure from hazards and increase the capability of waste infrastructure providers to respond to and recover quickly from local and regional emergencies.

Q10. How will the proposed outcomes enhance critical infrastructure resilience in NSW? What additional outcomes could be added to improve the Strategy?

The strategy shows the interrelationship between organisational resilience and community resilience, and between infrastructure resilience and community resilience, but does not seem to show a correlation between organisational resilience to infrastructure resilience. LGNSW notes that organisational and infrastructure resilience are linked, and this aspect should be brought out more in the strategy.

The role of the community in resilience planning should be enhanced. The Strategy refers to providing consistent and reliable advice to the community to help them prepare for emergencies and outages. However, more of a partnership approach has been adopted by Kuring-gai Council and Shoalhaven City Council to enable their communities to plan for resilience together. This resulted in increased understanding of roles and responsibilities, provided the opportunity to identify and document existing local knowledge considered to be critical for

disaster risk management and future adaptation, and created a shared vision for collaborative action.

Q12. What makes a compelling CIR argument for an organisation? What incentives are most compelling for an executive or board to enhance CIR?

Case studies that show how infrastructure resilience was increased and the implications (economic, cultural etc) on the organisation may be useful. It is also preferable to build on existing practices and procedures (such as IP&R, risk management, asset management practices, Emergency Management Committees etc) rather than developing new processes.

Q13. What types of emergency management training (online, face-to-face, workshops) and training content would be most useful for organisations and individuals?

A focus on infrastructure resilience might attract different professions to attend training than if it was focussed or titled emergency management training. Generally, councils prefer one or half day workshops located in regional areas. Webinars are also popular in regional areas where travel distance can be an issue.

Conclusion

LGNSW recommends that waste services be considered further within the emergency management context – both in terms of managing and cleaning up after emergencies, and also as an essential service that needs to be maintained. LGNSW notes that the provision of garbage services is listed in the *Essential Services Act 1988*. There are interdependencies between waste services and other critical infrastructure, and waste management is also integral to recovery operations.

Should you wish to discuss the issues raised in this submission further, please contact Denise Anderson at LGNSW on 9242 4056 or denise.anderson@lgnsw.org.au.

Yours sincerely



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