Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Australian Government Crisis Management Framework

September 2024

Version control

Date	Version	Comments
December 2012	**1.0**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 5.0) and Australian Government Crisis Management Arrangements: A Guide for Ministers (Version 1.1).
December 2013	**1.1**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 1.0) and reflects the Abbott Ministry and Administrative Arrangements Order of 18 September 2013.
August 2015	**1.2**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 1.1) and reflects the appointment of the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism and the Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.
January 2016	**1.3**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 1.2) and reflects the role of the Minister for Counter-Terrorism.
October 2016	**2.0**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 1.3).
May 2017	**2.1**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 2.0) and reflects updated administrative arrangements.
December 2017	**2.2**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 2.1) and reflects updated administrative arrangements following establishment of the Home Affairs portfolio.
October 2020	**2.3**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 2.2) and reflects updated administrative arrangements following the establishment of new ministerial portfolios focused on natural disasters and emergency management and revised Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) arrangements. This version also reflects the retirement of the Council of Australian Governments arrangements and associated structures.
July 2021	**3.0**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 2.3) and reflects the Government's response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.
December 2021	**3.1**	Administrative updates to describe the Australian Government National Joint Common Operating Picture and Australian Public Service Surge Reserve and provide updated detail on the handover arrangements from Emergency Management Australia to National Recovery and Resilience Agency.
November 2022	**3.2**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 3.1) and reflects updated administrative arrangements including the establishment of the National Emergency Management Agency.
September 2023	**3.3**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 3.2) and reflects updated administrative arrangements including the addition of a Cyber Incident annex.
September 2024	**4.0**	Replaces AGCMF (Version 3.3) and incorporates significant reforms reflecting the Australian Government's response to the 2023 Review of the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework.

Contents

Introduction

Purpose

The Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (the Framework) is the Australian Government's capstone policy framing Australia's national crisis management arrangements.

The Framework takes an all-hazards approach to crisis management, recognising the need for consistency across the Australian Government's crisis management systems in preparation for the full spectrum of hazards that may affect life, property or the natural environment.

The Framework outlines how the Australian Government prepares for, responds to and supports recovery from crises by:

- providing an overview of the Australian Government crisis management arrangements
- outlining the Australian Government's approach to crisis preparedness, including crisis preparedness arrangements and capabilities
- articulating the requirements for Australian Government responses spanning near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery by:
  - designating the lead Australian Government ministers, senior officials and agencies required to coordinate responses to identified hazards
  - outlining the roles and responsibilities of Australian Government ministers and senior officials
  - detailing the approach to coordination for extreme to catastrophic crises.

The Framework focuses on crisis management arrangements for identified hazards (see Appendix A on p. 47). Within the context of the Australian Government Crisis Management Continuum (p. 10), the Framework does not address prevention, longer-term recovery, reconstruction and risk reduction. It is not intended for crises predominately managed by policy intervention, including financial and economic crises.

The Framework underpins Australian Government responses to crises that occur within Australia, including Indian Ocean Territories, Norfolk Island and the Jervis Bay Territory, as well as to crises that affect Australians and Australian interests overseas.

The Framework is intended for Australian Government ministers and senior officials with a role in crisis management. An accompanying Handbook to the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (the Handbook) provides principles-based guidance for senior officials and their agencies on how to apply the Framework.

The Framework designates the following roles for each identified hazard:

- Lead Minister
- Australian Government Coordinating Agency
- Lead Coordinating Senior Official.

For more details on these roles, see the Principles section on p. 8 and the Roles and responsibilities section on p. 24.

The Framework outlines arrangements to support whole of Australian Government and national coordination in response to crisis. Whole of Australian Government coordination encompasses all Australian Government portfolios while national coordination refers to the inclusion of all government jurisdictions and other key stakeholders as relevant. Australian Government agencies work across both whole of Australian Government and national coordination.[1]

Australian, state and territory governments

Australia's states and territories are the first responders to incidents that occur within their jurisdictions. States and territories are responsible for crisis management at the jurisdictional level, including preparedness, response, relief and recovery.

The Australian Government does not seek to replicate the capabilities of states and territories. However, the Australian Government possesses strategic and operational capabilities that can ensure decisive action is taken during significant crises. The Australian Government seeks to harness national resources and ensure they are applied in appropriate, proportionate and equitable ways to secure the safety of all Australians.

The Australian Government:

- provides shared situational awareness and support to states and territories when coordinated assistance is requested
- undertakes and improves coordination of threat and security risk assessments and provides national security capabilities for significant crises
- supports a state or territory where, in the judgement of the Australian Government and following consultation with relevant jurisdictions where practicable, the nature of a crisis has or is expected to exceed the sovereign capacities of that state or territory
- jointly manages a crisis with states and/or territories if a crisis has the potential to affect, or has affected, multiple jurisdictions, the broader community or an Australian Government area of responsibility (such as the international dimension of a crisis)
- protects Australians and Australian interests overseas
- manages a crisis that is not the responsibility of states and territories
- works with states, territories, industry and the public to build national resilience against future hazards, particularly those with national consequences
- provides financial assistance to eligible Australian residents who are adversely affected by a crisis.

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1 'Australian Government' refers to government entities commonly described as 'federal' or 'Commonwealth', such as the Australian Government Department of Education. 'National' is broader in scope – it includes the Australian Government, state and territory governments, local governments, industry, civil society and any other entities that have interests in a crisis.

What is a crisis under the Framework?

For the purpose of this Framework, a crisis is an event that requires an immediate Australian Government response outside business-as-usual arrangements to manage potential or realised acute consequences and mitigate further harm. A crisis may:

- be natural, human-induced or technology-caused[2]
- cause wide-ranging harmful impacts across multiple sectors or jurisdictions within Australia, or significant impacts on any sector or jurisdiction, either immediately or over time
- adversely impact Australian lives, property and the environment, or our national security, interests or assets
- significantly impact Australian Government interests or assets, such as critical infrastructure or Australian Government services
- affect Australians or Australian interests overseas
- affect public trust in government institutions.

Crises by nature are difficult to predict and are associated with high levels of uncertainty. As each crisis will present unique challenges of varying severity and complexity, there is no standardised response. The Framework articulates the Australian Government's scalable approach to managing these challenges.

Triggers for Australian Government crisis coordination

Triggers to activate Australian Government crisis coordination arrangements set out in this Framework may include:

- an event meeting the definition of a crisis above
- formal ministerial consideration of the crisis event(s)
- community expectations of national leadership during the crisis
- requests for assistance from affected states, territories or countries
- multiple crises occurring simultaneously or compounding and escalating in complexity which require national coordination, resource prioritisation and de-confliction.

This Framework and the Handbook set out a 4-tier model of crisis coordination to support the application of crisis management arrangements. The Handbook provides guidance on assessing crisis events in the context of the tiers model.

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2   This includes health and biosecurity events.

Principles

The Framework is underpinned by the following principles and administrative arrangements to assist Australian Government decision-makers navigate priorities and decision-making in time-limited and challenging situations. These principles and arrangements should be considered and applied in all supporting documents identified in the Framework's hierarchy of documents, including all national plans (see Figure 1).

The Framework:

- contributes to:
  - saving lives and reducing harm
  - protecting property and the environment and safeguarding national interests and assets
  - providing national leadership and maintaining public trust and confidence in government systems
  - national capability sharing and prioritisation
  - continual improvement
- promotes a unity of effort across Australian, state and territory governments, civil society and the private sector
- acknowledges human rights considerations to ensure that measures enacted during crises are necessary, reasonable and proportionate
- acknowledges community at the core of response and recovery and the consideration of the needs of Australians who may be disproportionately at risk of harm
- acknowledges the importance of recognising and engaging with First Nations people and their communities before, during and after crises
- supports near-term crisis planning and preparedness, immediate crisis response and early recovery arrangements for events that impact Australians and Australian interests, domestically and internationally
- is underpinned by the principle of subsidiarity[3] and supports state and territory government crisis response and early recovery
- takes an all-hazards approach to crisis management
- is for significant imminent, current and future crises
- is a scalable and adaptable operational model that supports a coordinated approach across domestic and international crises.

Administrative arrangements

The establishment of the roles of **Lead Minister, Australian Government Coordinating Agency** and **Lead Coordinating Senior Official** (p. 24) under the Framework does not displace the existing executive responsibilities of ministers and senior officials. During a crisis, ministers and senior officials retain their statutory powers, with agencies and officials continuing to report to their respective ministers. This applies across all tiers of crisis coordination.

The 4-tier model of crisis coordination (p. 23) describes an overarching approach to whole of Australian Government coordination. It does not supersede sector-specific responsibilities, authority or the operational descriptors used to classify the level of crisis response (for example, as set out in national plans).

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3   Subsidiarity refers to the proximity of government to the community. The principle of subsidiarity is a core feature of federalism. Under a federal system such as in Australia, powers are distributed between a central government and regional governments.

Hierarchy of documents

A hierarchy of documents underpins the Australian Government's crisis management arrangements. Documents subordinate to the Framework must align with the Framework in describing their specific arrangements.
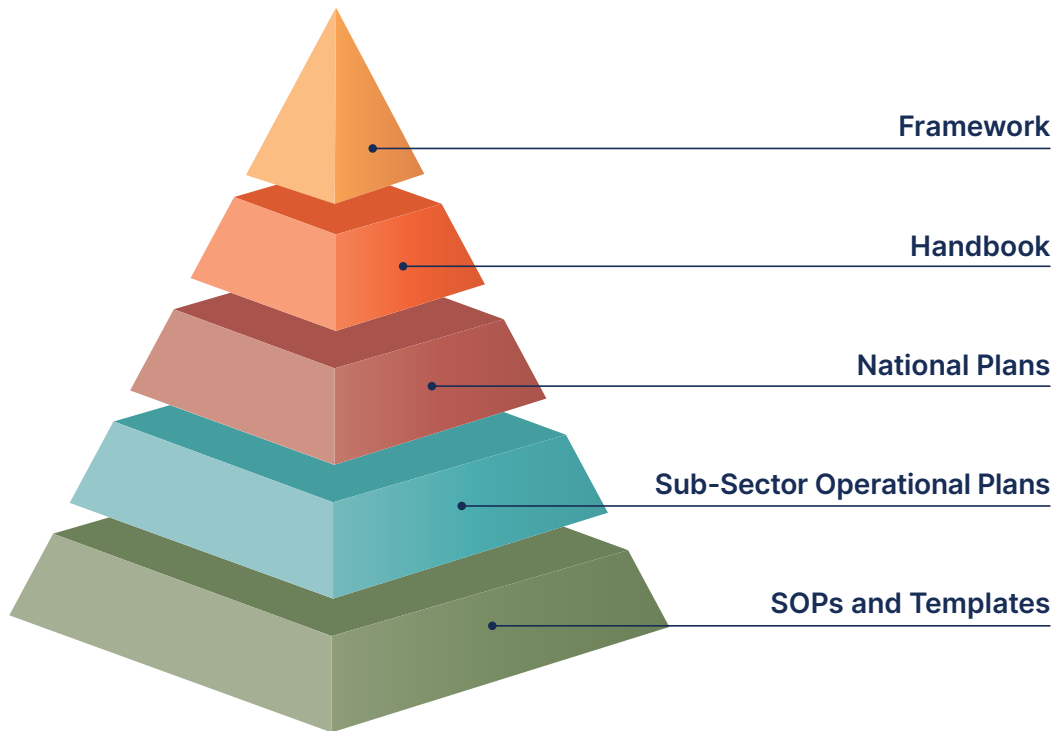
Figure 1. The hierarchy of documents

- The **Framework** is the Australian Government's capstone policy framing Australia's national crisis management arrangements. It is maintained by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C).
- The **Handbook** complements the Framework and provides principles-based crisis management guidance for senior officials. It is maintained by PM&C.
- **National plans** for hazards identified in this Framework articulate the hazard-specific coordination arrangements, their linkages to Australian Government coordination arrangements, relevant legislation and application of the principles of this Framework. These plans are maintained by relevant Australian Government agencies.
- **Sub-sector operational plans**, where required, articulate operational requirements, responsibilities and governance for specific types of incidents within a sector. They are maintained by the relevant portfolio agencies and aligned to relevant national plans.
- **Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and templates** support consistent responses across Australian Government agencies. They are maintained by the relevant portfolio agencies.

A list of national plans for identified hazards in this Framework can be found in Appendix A (p. 47). Sub-sector operational plans are referenced within relevant national plans.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) maintains guidance to support Australian Government agencies in developing, reviewing and maintaining their plans.

Australian Government Crisis Management Continuum
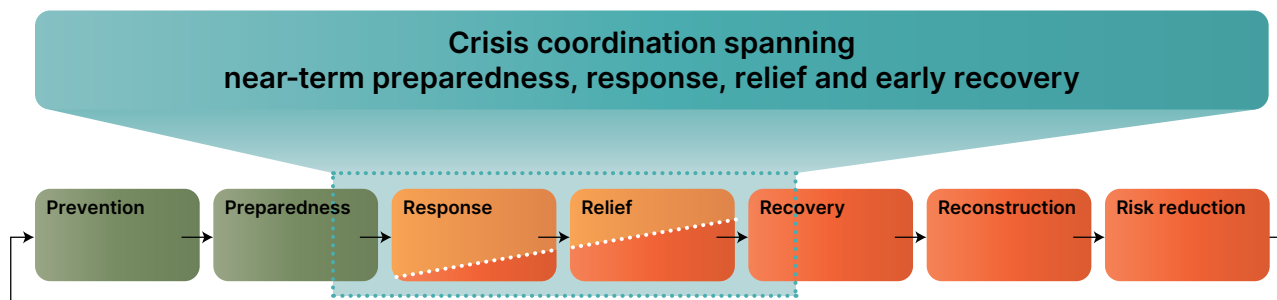
Figure 2. Phases of the Australian Government Crisis Management Continuum

The Australian Government's Crisis Management Continuum (Continuum) comprises 7 phases:

1. **Prevention** refers to measures to eliminate or reduce the severity of a hazard or crisis, and/or the likelihood of a hazard or crisis occurring. Prevention is not covered by this Framework.

2. **Preparedness** refers to arrangements to ensure that, should a crisis occur, the required resources, capabilities and services can be efficiently mobilised and deployed. Near-term preparedness recognises the need to rapidly prepare for an imminent crisis. For more detail on preparedness, refer to the Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework.[4]

3. **Response** refers to immediate actions taken to ensure that crisis impacts and consequences are minimised, and that those affected are supported as quickly as possible.

4. **Relief** refers to meeting the essential needs of food, water, shelter, energy, communications and essential medical services for those affected by a crisis event.

5. **Recovery** refers to early and longer-term measures to restore or improve the livelihoods, health, economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society. Early recovery includes temporary and near-term measures to support anticipated community needs. Recovery measures should align with the principles of sustainable development and 'build back better'[5] to avoid or reduce future disaster risk[6].

6. **Reconstruction** refers to implementing longer-term strategies post-incident to 'build back better' from a crisis, including identifying sustainable development approaches and mitigation measures that may be applicable beyond the directly affected community. Reconstruction is not covered by this Framework.

7. **Risk reduction** refers to reducing future risk by identifying and enacting measures that may be taken to reduce the impacts and consequences of future crises. Risk reduction is not covered by this Framework. Refer to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework[7] for more information.

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4 The Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework is available at:
   https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/australian-disaster-preparedness-framework.pdf.

5 A definition of 'build back better' is available at: https://www.undrr.org/terminology/build-back-better.

6 This is defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) at:
   https://www.undrr.org/terminology/recovery.

7 The National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework is available at:
   https://nema.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-disaster-risk-reduction-framework.pdf.

Across the Continuum, resilience refers to the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.[8] The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) publishes a collection of handbooks that provide guidance on national principles and practices for crisis resilience, including elements of the 7 phases of the Continuum.[9]

Scope of crisis coordination within the Continuum

This Framework establishes arrangements and capabilities to support crisis coordination during the phases of near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery.

These arrangements and capabilities are the primary focus of the Framework, which seeks to provide clear and robust arrangements to support rapid and effective Australian Government and national coordination during crisis. The full spectrum of the preparedness and recovery phases are also considered, acknowledging that phases of the continuum do not stand in isolation of each other.

Crisis coordination spanning near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery

Preparedness   Response   Relief   Recovery
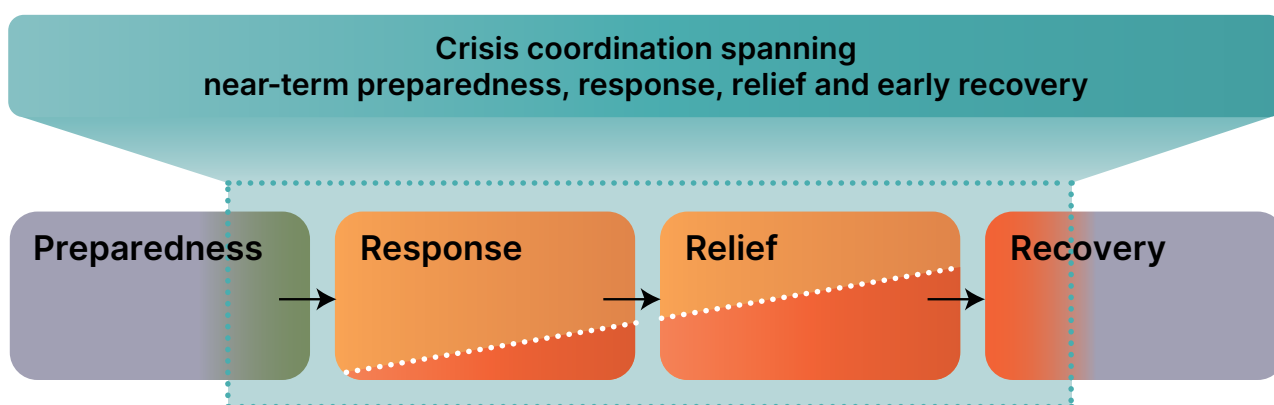
Figure 3. The phases on which this Framework focuses

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8   As defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR): https://www.undrr.org/terminology/resilience.
9   The AIDR Handbook Collection is available at: https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/collections/handbook-collection/.

Australian Government assistance

Financial assistance

The Australian Government may provide financial assistance to states and territories to support prevention and preparedness activities.

The Australian Government may provide financial assistance to states and territories for eligible response, recovery and resilience activities through programs such as the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

The Australian Government may directly support eligible individuals through programs such as the:

- Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP)[10]
- Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA)[11]
- Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment (AVTOP).[12]

Non-financial assistance

The Australian Government may provide non-financial assistance to states and territories to support preparedness activities, including planning advice and crisis management exercises.

The Australian Government may receive requests for or offer non-financial assistance to affected countries, states and/or territories.

Australian Government agencies may provide specific capabilities from within their portfolio to assist with a crisis response. Where possible, this assistance should be facilitated through Australian Government national plans.

International assistance

The Australian Government has the capacity to rapidly deploy humanitarian assistance to countries when they ask for help during crises. Australia's humanitarian assistance is led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and focuses on helping communities and governments prepare for, and respond to, disasters.

Where a foreign government requests, or is offered, Australian assistance, the deciding minister is responsible for the costs incurred, including if the minister has agreed to the deployment of state and territory resources. This is the case unless other arrangements are established or specified in an Australian Government national plan listed in Appendix A.

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10 Details of the AGDRP are available at: https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/disaster-arrangements/disaster-recovery-payment.

11 Details of the DRA are available at: https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/disaster-arrangements/disaster-recovery-allowance.

12 Details of the AVTOP are available at:
https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/disaster-arrangements/australian-victim-of-terrorism-overseas-payment.

Australian Aid (Department of Defence)

Preparedness

| Preparedness | Response | Relief | Recovery |
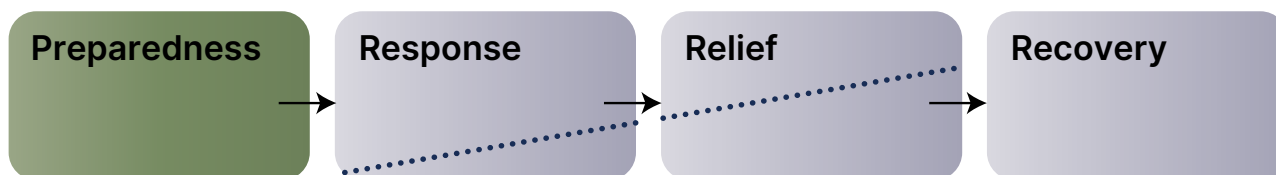
Figure 4. The preparedness phase of the Continuum

Preparedness refers to the activities that build the capabilities and capacity needed to efficiently manage crises and effectively transition from response to sustained recovery. Australian Government agencies should ensure they build and maintain a sufficient level of crisis preparedness.

Near-term preparedness refers to a period within the preparedness phase of the continuum that requires senior officials and agencies to *rapidly prepare to respond to forecast or potential impacts and consequences of an imminent crisis*. This period could be marked by a sudden shift in the crisis threat environment generating potential for significant and acute consequences to Australia or Australian interests. The principle of 'speed to action, speed to decision' would now drive preparedness and response behaviours and an increased level of coordination actions across government would be expected.

The **Lead Minister** is responsible for ensuring their portfolio is prepared to coordinate whole of Australian Government responses to significant crises, including familiarity with relevant legislation and sufficient staffing capacity or surge arrangements. The **Lead Coordinating Senior Official** is responsible for ensuring their agency (as the Australian Government Coordinating Agency) is prepared.

To maintain crisis preparedness, the **Australian Government Coordinating Agency** is responsible for developing, maintaining, exercising and evaluating the capabilities required to coordinate Australian Government responses to the hazard(s) designated to the agency. These capabilities include:

- a national plan for each identified hazard designated to the agency by this Framework (see Appendix A on p. 47)
- sector-specific crisis coordination mechanisms and arrangements
- a trained workforce with appropriate security clearances
- planning capability and familiarity with relevant crisis tools
- systems and processes used in crisis management.

The Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework can help to inform the strategic governance, policy and investment required to support national disaster preparedness.[13]

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13 The Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework is available at:
https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/australian-disaster-preparedness-framework.pdf

Crisis Arrangements Committee

The **Crisis Arrangements Committee** (CAC) is the peak Australian Government senior officials' crisis management preparedness committee. It has a role in ensuring that Australian Government operational crisis planning and preparedness activities are undertaken to address any identified critical gaps and that crisis arrangements remain fit-for-purpose in a changing threat environment.

The CAC:

- annually reviews and updates the list of identified hazards in the Framework
- oversees the development and maintenance of new national plans when required
- annually reviews and reports to departmental secretaries on the status of cross-government crisis management capability, capacity and surge workforce, and provides advice if required to address vulnerabilities
- audits existing national plans and arrangements for ongoing relevance and currency and alignment with the Framework
- reviews the full suite of national plans at least once every 3 years
- oversees Australian Government and relevant multinational crisis exercises and advises departmental secretaries on gaps and priorities for whole of Australian Government exercising.

Australian Government crisis capabilities

Australian Government agencies maintain capabilities to operationalise their designated roles under national plans. The Australian Government also maintains a number of capabilities to support whole of Australian Government and national coordination. These capabilities enhance situational awareness, coordination and response during a significant crisis, and complement existing state and territory capabilities.

Situational awareness

Whole of Australian Government situational awareness supports decision-making by ministers and senior officials to prioritise resources during a crisis and provide up-to-date information to the public.

The **Australian Government National Situation Room** (NSR) provides 24/7 all-hazards situational awareness, impact analysis and decision support capability, through its crisis operations, anticipatory analysis and planning capabilities. Australian Government agencies, states and territories may be invited to deploy a liaison officer into the NSR to facilitate coordination, collaboration, and communication between the Australian Government and affected jurisdictions.

The **National Joint Common Operating Picture** (NJCOP) is managed by the NSR and provides a near real time, all-hazards platform designed to display all active significant crisis events. It provides a shared and common understanding both nationally and across borders during crisis events.

Both the NSR and the NJCOP are managed by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) on behalf of the Australian Government.

The National Situation Room and the NJCOP (NEMA)

DFAT's Australian Government **Global Watch Office** (GWO) operates 24/7 to support the Australian Government's capacity to monitor and respond to emerging international events and crises that may have consequences for Australians or Australian interests overseas. GWO reporting and analysis provides situational awareness and informs whole of Australian Government messaging on evolving events, while also supporting diplomatic posts in the event of a crisis. The GWO issues alerts and situation reports based on advice provided by Australian diplomatic posts and the insights available through aggregated consular data.

DFAT will activate its **Crisis Centre** (CC) for significant and ongoing international crises, embedding any agencies that have equity in the whole of government response.

Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning

The **Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning** (CASP)[14] methodology is a structured, systematic methodology that uses strategic and critical thinking and conceptualises the big picture in crisis planning. It supports practitioners to manage challenges including concurrent events, consequences of uncertainty and complexity. It can be used by Australian, state and territory governments to conduct strategic planning and informs crisis decision-making at all levels.

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14 The CASP Guidebook is available at: https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/casp-guidebook.pdf

Australian Government Crisis Coordination Team

An Australian Government Crisis Coordination Team (CCT) can be established by NEMA to support coordination of Australian Government actions, in line with the strategic intent set by the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM). It may bring together representatives from relevant Australian Government agencies, as well as other key stakeholders and employs the CASP methodology to support strategic planning activities and decision support products.

Crisis surge workforce

Australian Government Coordinating Agencies are responsible for maintaining a surge cohort of appropriately trained staff with appropriate security clearances to coordinate and respond to a crisis.

There will be times when there is a requirement for staff to surge across the public service to support response activity. The **Australian Public Service Commission** (APSC) maintains a surge reserve that mobilises Australian Public Service (APS) staff in large numbers to respond to significant crises when required. Any agency may request this capability from the APSC.

Exercising

The Australian Government regularly conducts crisis exercises to ensure the preparedness of relevant Australian Government agencies for crisis response. This Framework and the Handbook are tested as part of these exercises with a focus on coordination arrangements for extreme to catastrophic crises (p. 38), escalation pathways and related coordination mechanisms.

NEMA delivers an annual national crisis exercising program, maintains shared awareness across government agencies of national crisis exercises, and reports on insights and learnings from exercises, to inform future preparedness, policy and capability requirements.

The Department of Home Affairs, through the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC), manages the Counter-Terrorism National Tiered Exercise Program in partnership with states and territories. This program validates and strengthens Australia's national counter-terrorism capabilities to support counter-terrorism prevention, preparedness and response.

The NEMA and ANZCTC programs deliver whole of government crisis exercising and build national exercising capability through complementary capability development programs. Agencies across the Australian Government also deliver crisis exercising and capability development for identified hazards and sectoral responses.

The National Preparedness Summit at Australian Parliament House in 2023

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement practices draw on learnings from evaluation of exercising and crisis events. These learnings are used to identify opportunities for continuous improvement of crisis management plans and arrangements to enhance crisis management preparedness.

The Australian Government conducts evaluation of its crisis management activities to ensure lessons are identified and integrated into whole of Australian Government continuous improvement practices.

Within 12 months of a significant crisis prompting Tier 3 or 4 crisis coordination, the **Australian Government Coordinating Agency** will conduct a whole of Australian Government evaluation. The outcomes of the evaluation should be distributed across the Australian Government and reported to the CAC to ensure identified lessons are integrated into continuous improvement processes managed through the CAC.

Review and update of the Framework

This Framework and the Handbook are reviewed annually. A comprehensive review will occur every 5 years, as well as following significant or novel crises. An administrative review will be conducted in all other years and may be prompted by machinery of government changes.

The appropriate **Deputy Secretary PM&C** maintains editorial control over the Framework on behalf of the Australian Government. Updates to the Framework will be coordinated by PM&C in close consultation with NEMA and other Australian Government agencies. Updates to the Framework will be released prior to the annual Higher Risk Weather Season and, where necessary, updates may be issued outside this cycle. It is intended that wherever possible, changes to the Framework will be avoided during extended periods of high operational activity.

Crisis coordination
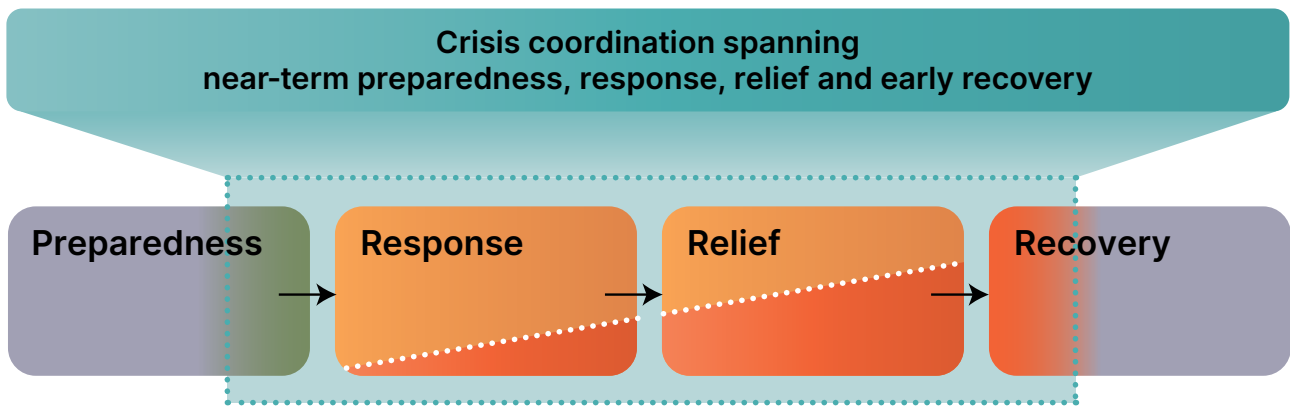
Figure 5. Crisis coordination spans near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery

A critical purpose of the Framework is articulating Australian Government coordination requirements for the near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery phases of the Continuum (see Figure 2). During these phases, actions are taken in anticipation of, during or immediately after a crisis to ensure that its effects are minimised and that those affected are given relief and support as quickly as possible.

To support this, the Framework:

- sets out the role of the tiered model for coordination
- designates lead Australian Government ministers and agencies required to coordinate responses to identified hazards
- outlines the roles and responsibilities of Australian Government ministers and senior officials
- details the approach to coordination for extreme to catastrophic crises.

Coordination functions

Figure 6. Coordination functions

The **Lead Coordinating Senior Official** performs functions to support near-term preparedness for, response to and early recovery from crisis (see Figure 6), including:

- facilitating near real time shared situational awareness across the Australian Government (using situation reports and relevant forums)
- monitoring impacts and consequences of the crisis across all sectors
- convening crisis forums
- coordinating a whole of Australian Government crisis communication strategy and ensuring dissemination of whole of Australian Government crisis communication products and public information (including whole of government talking points)
- conducting strategic planning to:
  - identify Australian Government equities
  - establish and facilitate agreement to whole of Australian Government coordination priorities and objectives, response requirements and responsibilities
  - coordinate cross-government advice to relevant ministers
- conducting a post-incident evaluation of significant crises to inform continuous improvement of Australian Government capabilities and arrangements.

During crisis, coordination efforts by the Australian Government should:
- provide senior officials with an accurate and unified picture of the crisis
- support decision-making by ministers and key decision-making bodies
- ensure consistent public messaging and information
- maintain public safety and trust in government institutions
- ensure ministerial directions are effectively implemented across government
- de-conflict government actions and support effective resource prioritisation.

Assisted departure from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (DFAT)

A 4-tier model for crisis coordination

The Australian Government uses a 4-tier approach to guide and support appropriate and consistent levels of coordination in response to crises.

There is no standardised response to crises. Every crisis is unique and will present different challenges. As the nature of a crisis changes over time, the Australian Government must be able to shift and adapt its coordination in accordance with the severity and complexity of the impacts and consequences.

The Australian Government's 4-tier crisis coordination model helps Australian Government ministers and officials:

- assess the severity and complexity of a crisis and its impacts and consequences
- determine the appropriate crisis coordination and decision-making needs and the appropriate mechanisms to respond to these needs
- decide when to escalate or de-escalate the tier of crisis coordination
- manage responses to both a crisis and its consequences as they become clear
- adjust the coordination over time if required by evolving impacts and consequences, including the ability to change the Lead Minister and Australian Government Coordinating Agency.

The Handbook provides **Lead Coordinating Senior Officials** with principles-based crisis management guidance, including the application of the 4-tier model.

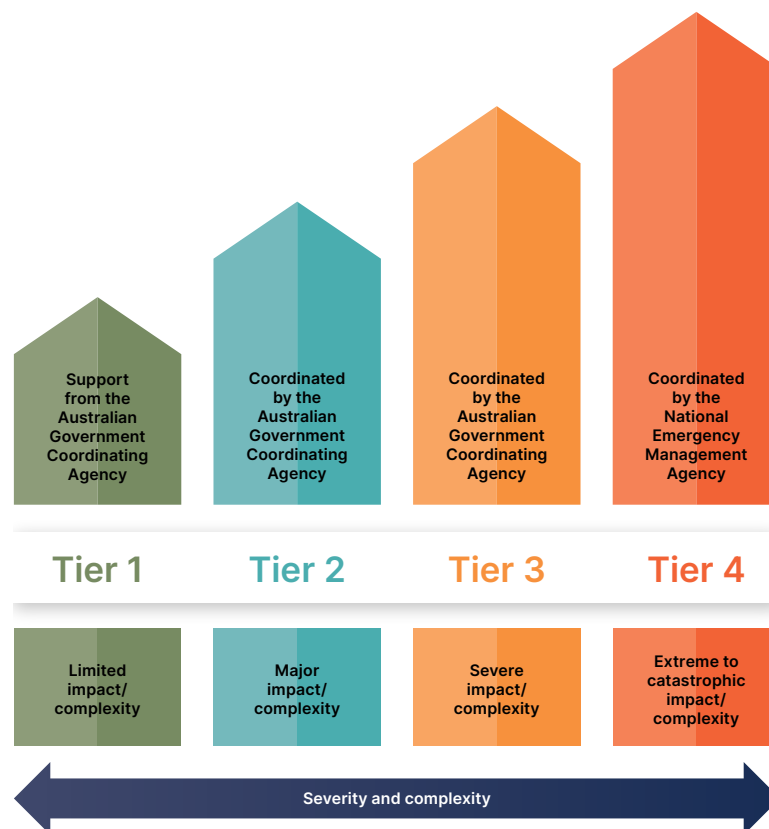| Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Support from the Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Coordinated by the Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Coordinated by the Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Coordinated by the National Emergency Management Agency
Limited impact/ complexity	Major impact/ complexity	Severe impact/ complexity	Extreme to catastrophic impact/ complexity

Severity and complexity

Figure 7. The Australian Government's 4-tier crisis coordination model[15]

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15 The tiers of coordination refers to the scale of Australian Government coordination required. The severity and complexity of a crisis would influence the scale of coordination required among other factors, and therefore influence how the tier of coordination is determined.

Roles and responsibilities

An important function of this Framework is articulating the roles and responsibilities of Australian Government ministers and senior officials. During a significant crisis, clarity of purpose and priorities is crucial for ensuring that an Australian Government response is aligned and effective, and sustains community trust.

This Framework designates Lead Ministers, Australian Government Coordinating Agencies and Lead Coordinating Senior Officials for identified hazards. Where there is no clearly identified hazard (see Appendix A on p. 47), PM&C will work with NEMA and relevant Australian Government agency officials to identify an appropriate Australian Government Coordinating Agency, depending on the realised or likely impacts and consequences of the hazard and required Australian Government capabilities.

To facilitate a consistent approach, definitions for the key roles are provided below.

- A **Lead Minister** is the Australian Government minister responsible for leading coordination in response to a significant crisis caused by an identified hazard under this Framework.
- An **Australian Government Coordinating Agency** is the agency required to lead the coordination across the Australian Government for a significant crisis caused by an identified hazard under this Framework. This agency also leads the consequence management[16] activities within its agency functions and sector-specific responsibilities.
  ◦ Subject to agreement, an Australian Government Coordinating Agency can change during a crisis should the impacts evolve over time to predominantly affect a different Australian Government portfolio or where NEMA assumes the role.
  ◦ Following a change, the former Australian Government Coordinating Agency would become a Sector Lead Agency and continues to lead the consequence management activities within its agency functions and sector-specific responsibilities.
- A **Lead Coordinating Senior Official** is the designated senior official within an Australian Government Coordinating Agency who is responsible for leading the coordination for a significant crisis.
- A **Sector Lead Agency** is an Australian Government agency that contributes to whole of Australian Government crisis coordination activities and leads the consequence management activities relevant to agency functions and sector-specific responsibilities.
- An **Enabling Agency** is an Australian Government agency that administers relevant programs, provides specialist technical, scientific, intelligence or information capabilities or conducts any other enabling activities to support consequence management activities.

The establishment of the roles of **Lead Minister, Australian Government Coordinating Agency and Lead Coordinating Senior Official** under the Framework does not displace the existing executive responsibilities of ministers and senior officials. During a crisis, ministers and senior officials retain their statutory powers, with agencies and officials continuing to report to their respective ministers. This applies across all tiers of crisis coordination.

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16 Consequence management refers to a process undertaken to predict, identify, manage and minimise negative outcomes and impacts from crises.

Figure 8. Key roles and their responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Lead Minister	• Provides advice to the Prime Minister and the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) (or other Committees of Cabinet) on whole of Australian Government crisis priorities and consequence management objectives. • Oversees a coordinated Australian Government response to crisis and coordinates ministerial activities by collaborating with other Australian, state and territory counterparts. • Exercises executive responsibilities and decision-making in consultation with Australian Government ministers with relevant interests. • Ensures there are systems and procedures available so that they are readily contactable. • Ensures their office maintains business continuity plans in the event that the office is affected directly by a crisis. • Acts as the key Australian Government spokesperson in alignment with a whole of Australian Government crisis communications strategy. • Records ministerial decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.
Other ministers	• Ensure their portfolios are prepared to support crisis coordination. • Provide advice to the Prime Minister and the NSC (or other Committees of Cabinet) on Australian Government crisis priorities and objectives relevant to their respective portfolio responsibilities. • Oversee the consequence management activities of agencies within their portfolio. • Retain and execute executive responsibilities and decision-making in consultation with Australian Government ministers with relevant interests. • Record ministerial decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.

Roles	Responsibilities
Lead Coordinating Senior Official	• Ensures that their agency (an Australian Government Coordinating Agency designated under the Framework) is prepared and positioned to coordinate Australian Government actions in response to crisis or crises caused by their designated identified hazard(s) • Advises and supports the Lead Minister in executing the Lead Minister's responsibilities. • Where the Lead Minister is the Prime Minister, advises and supports the Prime Minister through PM&C. • Assesses the level of crisis coordination required, and establishes, reviews and adapts the appropriate tier of coordination over the course of the crisis. • Maintains near real time situational awareness and monitors impacts and consequences of the crisis across all sectors. • Facilitates shared situational awareness across the Australian Government and nationally. • Facilitates agreement to whole of Australian Government coordination priorities and objectives. • Ensures coordination of cross-government advice to relevant ministers. • Engages and collaborates with counterparts in Sector Lead Agencies and Enabling Agencies to ensure the requirements under this Framework are being met. • Regularly convenes an overarching senior officials' coordination forum during a crisis in collaboration with senior official responsible for the relevant forum. • In line with chairing arrangements, co-chairs the peak senior official's crisis coordination committee and briefs NSC (or other Committee of Cabinet), as required. • Maintains clear lines of communication with the Lead Minister's office. • Coordinates development of a whole of Australian Government crisis communications strategy and ensures the dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole of government talking points and briefing materials). • Coordinates strategic planning activities. • Maintains oversight of any requests for or offers of assistance received by Australian Government agencies from state, territory or foreign governments, coordinating with responsible agencies, including DFAT and NEMA. • Manages risks related to crisis coordination. • Engages with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions as required, coordinating with responsible agencies including DFAT and NEMA. • As crisis coordination concludes, ensures transfer of any ongoing responsibilities and processes to relevant senior officials, agencies (including state and territory leads) and recovery coordination mechanisms. • Conducts post-response evaluation and supports integration of relevant lessons identified into the continuous improvement of the Australian Government's crisis management arrangements, including plans and capabilities. • Maintains records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.

Roles	Responsibilities
Australian Government Coordinating Agency	• Monitors crisis events that may impact the interests and responsibilities of agencies across the Australian Government. • Supports the Lead Coordinating Senior Official in making decisions and recommendations on the level of coordination and response required. • Harnesses capabilities and resources in line with coordination requirements from within the portfolio, and from other agencies when portfolio-managed options are insufficient. • Provides secretariat and convening functions for sector-specific committees. • Supports development and coordination of a whole of Australian Government crisis communications strategy and ensures the dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole of government talking points and briefing materials). • As crisis coordination concludes, supports the transfer of any continuing functions and responsibilities to relevant officials and agencies (including state and territory leads) and recovery coordination mechanisms. • Conducts post-response evaluation and supports integration of relevant lessons identified into the continuous improvement of the Australian Government's crisis management arrangements, including plans and capabilities. • When a crisis occurs in an Australian External Territory, works with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) to coordinate crisis management. • Deploys liaison officers to the NSR, DFAT CC or other operations centres as required to support situational awareness. • Engages with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions, coordinating with responsible agencies including NEMA and DFAT as required. • Maintains business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis. • Maintains records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.

Roles	Responsibilities
Sector Lead Agency	• Monitors crisis events that may impact the agency's interests and responsibilities. • Conducts sector-specific responses and consequence management activities within its own portfolio, including coordination across jurisdictional equities as required. • Deploys liaison officers to the NSR, DFAT CC or other operations centres as required to support shared situational awareness. • Proactively contributes to the whole of Australian Government crisis communications strategy, dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole of government talking points and briefing materials). • Engages with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions, coordinating with responsible agencies including DFAT and NEMA as required. • Manages risks related to the consequence management activities within their own portfolios. • Maintains business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis. • Maintains records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.
Enabling Agency	• Administers relevant programs. • Provides specialist technical, scientific, intelligence or information capabilities. • Supports or conducts any other enabling activities to support consequence management activities. • Deploys liaison officers to the NSR, DFAT CC or other operations centres as required to support shared situational awareness. • Proactively contributes to the whole of Australian Government crisis communications strategy, dissemination of crisis communications products and public information (such as whole of government talking points and briefing materials). • Engages with counterparts in states, territories and/or international jurisdictions as required, coordinating with responsible agencies including NEMA and DFAT. • Maintains business continuity plans to ensure the agency can continue to perform its role if it is affected directly by a crisis. • Maintains records of decisions and actions relevant to the crisis.

The Prime Minister

Depending on the nature and scale of the crisis, the Prime Minister may decide to lead some or all elements of the Australian Government's preparation for, response to and recovery from a crisis, including acting as the key Australian Government spokesperson. When this occurs, the Prime Minister will undertake the Lead Minister role and advise ministers which elements of coordination the Prime Minister will lead and which elements the relevant portfolio minister will continue to lead, in line with the principles of Cabinet Government.[17] For a list of coordination responsibilities relevant to the Lead Minister role, see Figure 8.

The Prime Minister may convene the NSC or other Committees of Cabinet as the Prime Minister deems necessary. The Prime Minister may also convene the National Cabinet at short notice to ensure coordinated action across Australian, state and territory governments.

The Prime Minister may advise the Governor-General to make a national emergency declaration (NED) in accordance with the *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020*. The process for making a NED, including legal and consultation thresholds, is outlined in the National Emergency Declaration Aide-Mémoire, maintained by PM&C.

The Prime Minister is the **Lead Minister** for Tier 4 coordination. The Prime Minister may delegate the Lead Minister role to another minister. At Tier 4 where NEMA is the Australian Government Coordinating Agency, NEMA will brief the Prime Minister through PM&C.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

PM&C is responsible for the policy settings for whole of Australian Government crisis management arrangements. It is responsible for maintaining this Framework and the Handbook.

If required, PM&C can:

- initiate an Australian Government response
- determine the initial tier of coordination and adjust the tier over time
- determine the initial Australian Government Coordinating Agency
- co-chair the peak senior officials' crisis coordination committee, including the NCM or Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force (IDETF)
- change the Australian Government Coordinating Agency and Lead Coordinating Senior Official following consultation with relevant senior officials
- initiate escalation to NEMA-led coordination (see the Coordination for extreme to catastrophic crises (Tier 4) section on p. 38).

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17 The principles of Cabinet Government can be found in the Cabinet Handbook at: https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/administration/cabinet-handbook-15th-edition/cabinet-government-australia.

National Emergency Management Agency

NEMA is the custodian of Australian Government crisis capabilities that support some or all elements of crisis coordination.

NEMA:

- administers the NCM on behalf of Australian Government agencies
- supports whole of Australian Government situational awareness through the NSR and NJCOP
- supports Australian Government crisis management capabilities by providing best practice guidance, including for preparatory and strategic planning, crisis communication and recovery.

The **Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management and Response, NEMA** (DCG EMR NEMA) is responsible for Australian Government crisis preparedness, response, relief, and transition to early recovery.

DCG EMR NEMA:

- chairs (or co-chairs) the NCM
- supports timely, accurate and coordinated decision making
- oversees the NSR.

NEMA is the **Australian Government Coordinating Agency** responsible for whole of Australian Government coordination during extreme and catastrophic crises (Tier 4). For more details, see the 'Coordination for extreme and catastrophic crises (Tier 4)' section on p. 38.

NEMA may also lead Tier 3 coordination at the request of the designated Australian Government Coordinating Agency, subject to the designated Australian Government Coordinating Agency demonstrating that response requirements are beyond its coordination capacity or capability. **PM&C** may also initiate transition to NEMA-led coordination.

NEMA is the default **Australian Government Coordinating Agency** when a **crisis is novel or not designated** in the Framework, or when there are concurrent crises, until such time as an appropriate Australian Government Coordinating Agency is agreed. The Minister responsible for Emergency Management is the default **Lead Minister** until such time that an appropriate Lead Minister is agreed.

Decision-making and coordination mechanisms

Australian Government ministers and officials use various mechanisms to conduct crisis coordination, depending on the nature of the crisis. These mechanisms can rapidly bring relevant stakeholders together to ensure that the crisis response is aligned within the Australian Government as well as between governments and industry, and based on expert advice.

These mechanisms are established as needed, in line with coordination requirements. Australian Government ministerial decisions may be supported through the NSC, the National Cabinet, or other ministerial forums deemed appropriate by the Prime Minister to address the requirements of the crisis.
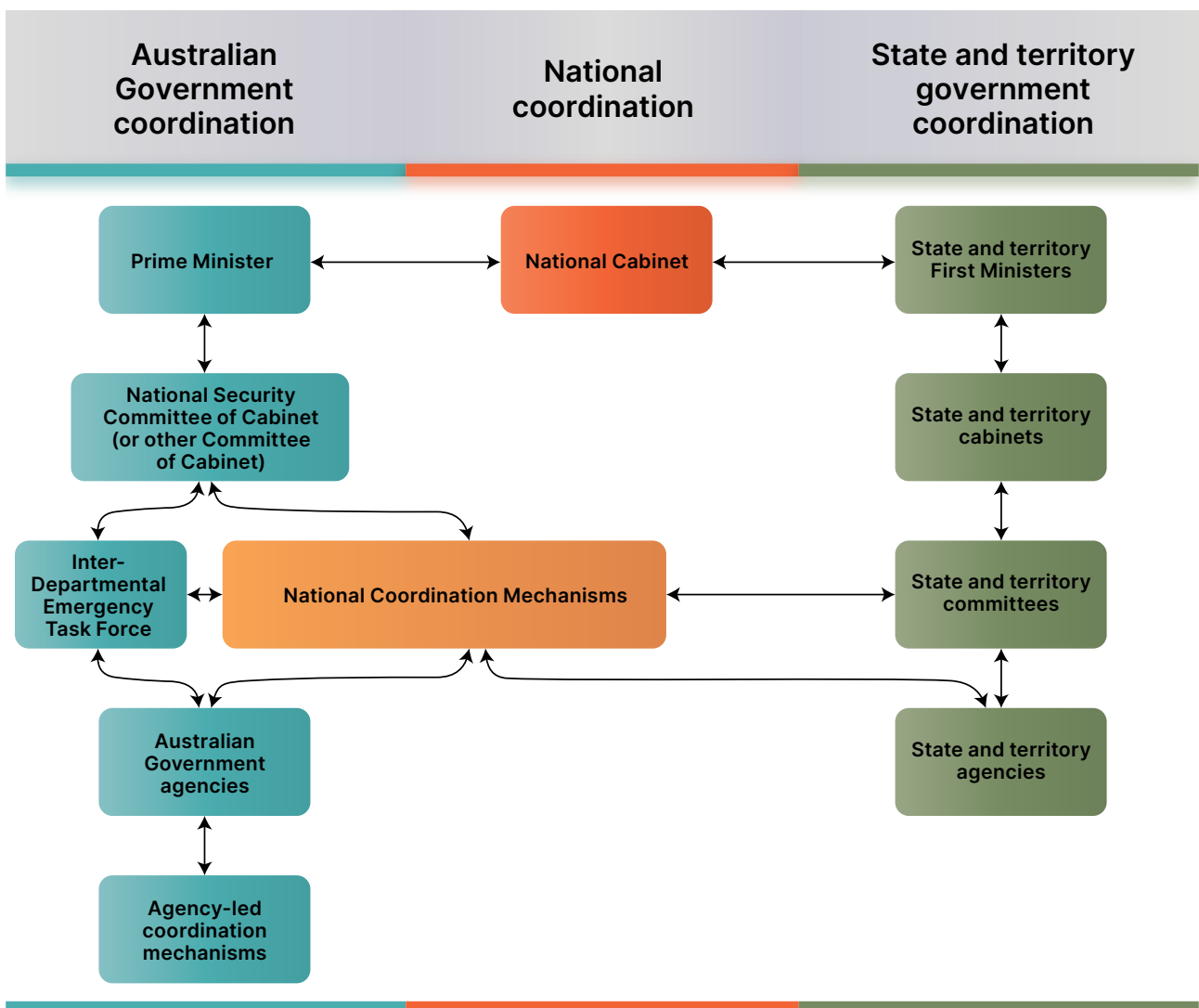

Figure 9. Mechanisms to support decision-making during crisis coordination

The National Security Committee of Cabinet

The **NSC** is the peak all-hazards crisis decision-making committee of Cabinet. During crises, the Australian Government can make time-critical ministerial decisions and coordinate responses through short-notice meetings of the NSC. Where NSC crisis considerations have implications for the portfolios of non-NSC ministers, the Prime Minister may agree to co-opt these ministers to the meeting. Where deemed appropriate by the Prime Minister, the chair(s) of the relevant peak senior officials' crisis forum (NCM or IDETF) may be co-opted to the NSC to:

- provide coordinated cross-government updates
- provide advice on resource prioritisation
- provide advice on communications to the public
- inform crisis-related decision-making.

PM&C will provide advice to the Prime Minister as required on co-option of non-NSC ministers, and chair(s) of the peak senior officials' crisis forum to the NSC.

The **Prime Minister** may also convene other Cabinet Committees to support crisis decision making as the Prime Minister deems appropriate.

National Coordination Mechanism

The **NCM** is the peak senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism providing a national picture of crisis to governments and key stakeholders. The NCM provides the convening mechanism to bring together Australian Government, state and territory government and non government representatives immediately before, during and after a crisis.

The NCM is flexible, scalable and vector-agnostic. It facilitates rapid problem definition and shared situational awareness, and ensures ownership of solutions to drive the rapid stabilisation of crisis events. It uses a domain- or sector-based approach to promote collaboration between stakeholders with equities in the crisis, strengthening and formalising the existing relationships between governments, industry and civil society. During concurrent, compounding or complex crises, the NCM enables the harnessing of the collective national capabilities to support communities.

During crisis, the strategic aims of the NCM are to:

- facilitate whole of Australian Government and national coordination and decision-making
- maintain near real time situational awareness
- ensure national leadership and the maintenance of public trust in government systems
- ensure that the problem is clearly defined and understood
- agree on lines of effort to mitigate the impacts and consequences of a significant crisis
- ensure actions are synchronised, coordinated and responsive
- support the continuity of critical community functions
- communicate actions and coordinate public messaging
- reduce harm and the overall severity of the crisis.

The relevant **DCG NEMA (or delegate) convenes and chairs the NCM** on behalf of the Australian Government, supported by NEMA. PM&C may elect to co-chair an NCM. Other relevant Australian Government agencies may co-chair, at the request of the NEMA chair or where they are the Australian Government Coordinating Agency. States, territories, private sector or the not-for-profit sector may request that an NCM is activated for a specific purpose/issue, noting that a decision to activate an NCM remains a matter for the relevant DCG NEMA (or delegate).

NCM participation is flexible and can be wide-ranging. In the context of their role in the NCM, participants bring information, expertise and experience from their sectors, and actively contribute to shared situational awareness and cross-sectoral coordination of priorities and actions.

The NCM (including NCM-AUSGOV has a formalised reporting line to the NSC, or other relevant Committee of Cabinet as determined by the Prime Minister, during times of crisis to ensure consistent whole of Australian Government situational awareness and response recommendations. Where agreed by the Prime Minister, the chair(s) of the NCM may be co-opted to the NSC to provide briefings on matters related to crisis.

Where appropriate, the chair(s) of the NCM may also brief the Prime Minister and relevant ministers at the earliest opportunity, following a significant crisis.

For Tier 1 to 3 international crisis coordination, the IDETF is the peak senior officials' coordination mechanism. In the case where both the NCM and the IDETF are activated, it is the responsibility of the respective chairs, in consultation with PM&C, to agree which forum will function as the peak senior officials' mechanism.

For Tier 4 crisis coordination, the NCM is the peak crisis coordination mechanism, with IDETF reporting to the NCM.
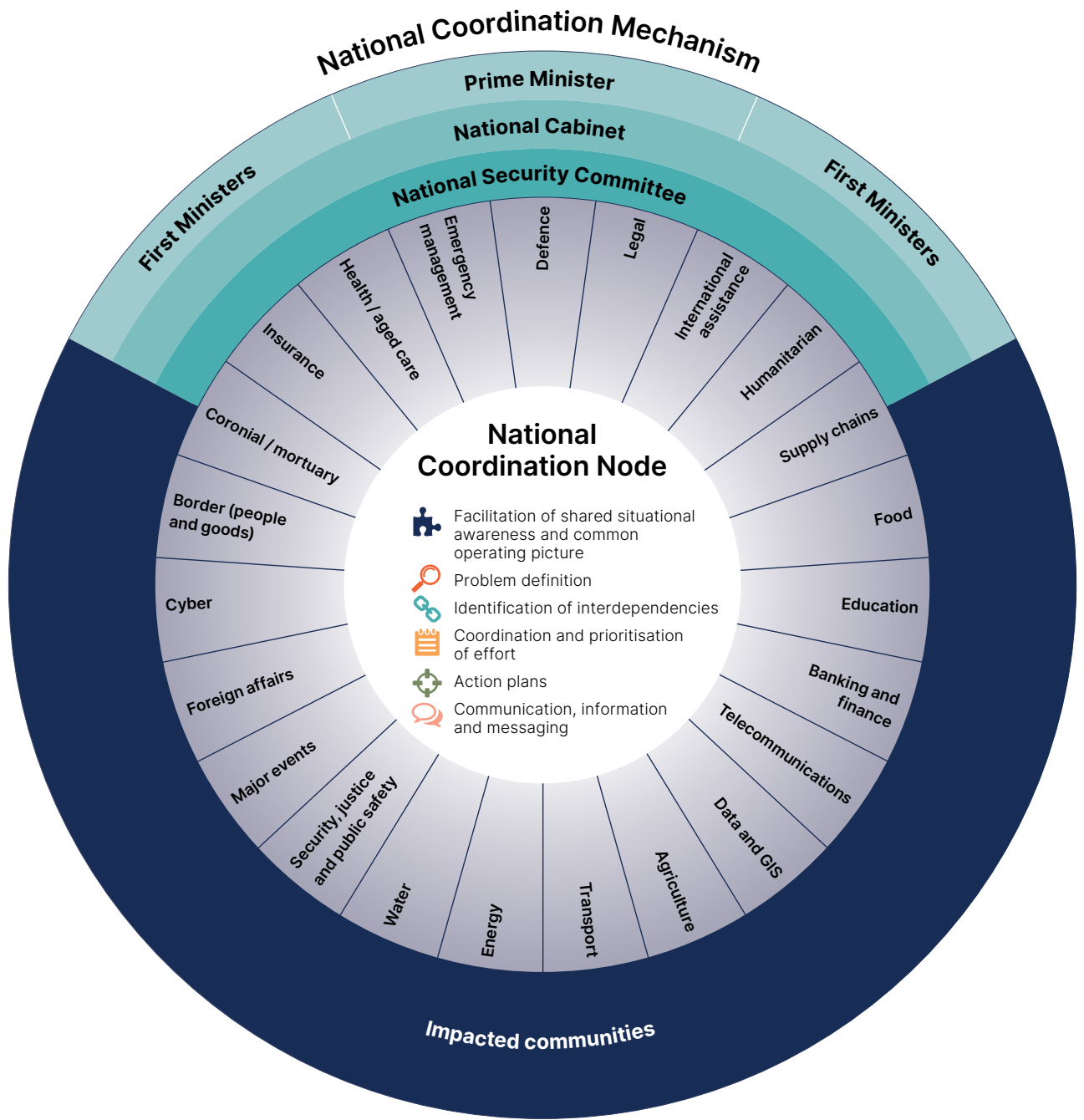
Figure 10. National Coordination Mechanism

Australian Government NCM

The Australian Government NCM (NCM-AUSGOV) is a specialised NCM that supports a shared whole of Australian Government picture of crisis, with participants drawn from across the Australian Government.

During crisis, the initial convening of the NCM-AUSGOV should include broad representation across Australian Government agencies where appropriate, to build a comprehensive understanding of all Australian Government equities and interests. Participants should include **response and recovery** representation from all relevant agencies. This is to ensure appropriate representation during the crisis response phase, where there is a potential role for the Australian Government in supporting recovery activities.

Each participating agency will bring information, expertise and experience from their agency and sector, and actively contribute to shared situational awareness and cross-government coordination of priorities and actions.

The relevant **DCG NEMA (or delegate)** is chair and NEMA provides secretariat services in collaboration with the Australian Government Coordinating Agency, as required. The relevant Deputy Secretary PM&C (or delegate) may elect to chair or co-chair the NCM-AUSGOV or delegate this responsibility to the Australian Government Coordinating Agency.

When the focus is on response to a domestic terrorism-related event, the Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (or delegate) may chair the NCM-AUSGOV, supported by the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Centre (CTCC) and NEMA. The Deputy Secretary PM&C (or delegate) may elect to chair or co-chair the NCM-AUSGOV.

Capabilities that support the NCM

The NCM is supported with strategic planning, near real time situational awareness and other coordination and decision-support functions by:

- the NSR
- the NJCOP
- the CCT
- the CASP methodology.

The CCT supports coordination of Australian Government operational activities in line with the strategic intent set by the NCM, including the NCM-AUSGOV.

Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force

The **IDETF** is the peak senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism during Australian Government responses to international crises between Tiers 1 to 3. **The relevant Deputy Secretary DFAT (or delegate) is the chair**, and the relevant Deputy Secretary PM&C (or delegate) may co-chair with DFAT where appropriate. DFAT provides secretariat services for the IDETF.

Where agreed by the Prime Minister, the chair(s) of the IDETF may be co-opted to the NSC to brief on matters related to crises. They should seek to brief the Prime Minister and relevant ministers through PM&C at the earliest opportunity, where appropriate.

In response to a crisis that has significant international and domestic consequences, and triggers coordination in line with Tier 4 arrangements, the NCM becomes the peak senior officials' crisis coordination forum (see the Coordination for extreme and catastrophic crises (Tier 4) section on p. 38). In such instances, DFAT remains responsible for delivering response requirements for all international elements of the crisis, and may convene the IDETF to support this responsibility. The IDETF, if convened, reports to the NCM, with the IDETF chair(s) updating the NCM on the international elements of the Australian Government response.

The IDETF chair(s) should also brief DCG EMR NEMA on any offers of, or requests for, assistance from overseas countries.

Portfolio-based mechanisms

Portfolios that maintain national plans and crisis management arrangements may have bespoke coordination and advice-seeking mechanisms within their own portfolios.

Special and temporary mechanisms

When existing crisis arrangements are not fit-for-purpose for a specific crisis, it may be appropriate for the Lead Minister to establish special and temporary mechanisms in parallel with existing mechanisms to ensure effective and aligned Australian Government coordination.

These special and temporary mechanisms may include:

- an inter-departmental committee
- an ad hoc secretaries' coordination meeting
- a dedicated whole of Australian Government taskforce
- government-industry working groups
- the appointment of a special envoy.

Any special purpose or temporary mechanisms should be guided by and complement existing arrangements, to ensure a consistent and effective approach to crisis across the Australian Government. Where special purpose/temporary mechanisms are established, senior officials should ensure arrangements are in place to brief their agencies.

The relevant peak senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism chair (or delegate) should quickly establish the relationship between the peak and new mechanisms, and communicate arrangements to relevant agencies/officials. Specifically, the chair (or delegate) should establish:

- a clear understanding of respective roles, responsibilities and functions
- clear lines for information sharing, decision making and accountability
- a consistent whole of Australian Government communication strategy.

Strategic crisis policy coordination

In significant emerging or protracted crises, there may be the need to establish a whole of government strategic policy coordination mechanism to consider complex strategic policy issues arising from the crisis. The need to establish this mechanism may be driven by:

- a sudden shift in the crisis threat environment that generates the potential for significant acute consequences on Australia or Australian interests
- a severe or protracted crisis prompting the need to shift policy settings to ensure the continuation of societal functions, or enable unprecedented support.

This mechanism would work in parallel with the operational coordination undertaken by the NCM.

The mechanism may support consideration of existing policy settings to prevent the reoccurrence of unintended consequences during crises, and policy issues associated with the transition to longer-term recovery from crises. It may also be used to address identified strategic policy or capability gaps, by coordinating rapid policy development, reforms and proposals. It could be applied during the near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery phases of the Continuum (p. 10).

The mechanism would be aligned with the existing special and temporary purpose mechanism provisions under this Framework and be integrated with existing operational crisis coordination mechanisms, particularly the NCM(s). To support this, the chair of the strategic policy coordination mechanism should participate in relevant NCM(s). The mechanism would be established and led by PM&C.

Coordination for extreme to catastrophic crises (Tier 4)

For the purpose of an Australian Government response, Tier 4 coordination may be triggered by any type of hazard(s) where the complexity and severity of impacts and consequences requires the highest level of coordination across the full span of Australian Government interests.

A crisis requiring Tier 4 coordination may:

- be caused by any hazard(s)
- be highly complex, including concurrent, compounding and/or consecutive crisis events, resulting in interlinked and cascading consequences requiring coordination across the full range of Australian Government and national equities and interests
- have wide-ranging harmful impacts and consequences across multiple jurisdictions and sectors of society, and extreme to catastrophic impacts on Australians
- have overwhelmed Australia's technical, non-technical and social systems and resources, and degraded or disabled governance structures and strategic and operational decision-making functions.

Tier 4 coordination is expected to involve most or all portfolios. It supports whole of nation responses spanning domestic and international jurisdictions. It could be supported by a number of national plans, including the Australian Government Catastrophic Crisis Plan (AUSCATPLAN) maintained by NEMA.

During Tier 4 coordination, ministers, senior officials and their agencies have clear responsibilities to ensure Australian Government coordination and response activities are well aligned and responsive as the impacts and consequences of the crisis evolve. The Handbook provides additional principles-based guidance on roles and responsibilities to initiate and undertake Tier 4 coordination.

> The establishment of the roles of **Lead Minister, Australian Government Coordinating Agency** and **Lead Coordinating Senior Official** (p. 24) under the Framework does not displace the existing executive responsibilities of ministers and senior officials. During a crisis requiring Tier 4 coordination, ministers and senior officials retain their statutory powers, with agencies and officials continuing to report to their respective ministers.

Coordination arrangements

The **Prime Minister** is the Lead Minister for Tier 4 coordination. The Prime Minister may delegate the Lead Minister role to another minister.

NEMA is the Australian Government Coordinating Agency for Tier 4 coordination. NEMA will brief the Prime Minister through PM&C.

DCG EMR NEMA is the Lead Coordinating Senior Official for Tier 4 coordination.

During Tier 4 coordination, the **NCM** is the peak crisis coordination mechanism.

- The relevant DCG NEMA (or delegate) is a co-chair of the NCM, including NCM-AUSGOV.
- NEMA provides secretariat services to the NCM.
- The relevant Deputy Secretary PM&C or delegate is a co-chair of the NCM.
- Where deemed appropriate by the Prime Minister, DCG NEMA and the relevant Deputy Secretary PM&C, as co-chairs of the NCM, may be co-opted to the NSC to inform ministerial decision making.

The NCM may be informed by subsidiary sector-specific coordination forums, including inter-departmental committees, or sector-specific NCMs.

The IDETF is the peak senior officials' crisis coordination mechanism for international crises during Tiers 1–3 coordination, and reports to the NCM during Tier 4 coordination.

Where another agency was responsible for Australian Government coordination prior to transitioning to NEMA at Tier 4, that agency may consider co-locating operational officers to the NSR to support whole of Australian Government coordination.

Other Australian Government agencies and ministers retain responsibility for leading consequence management activities within their own sectors, including existing legislative power and responsibilities.

Recovery
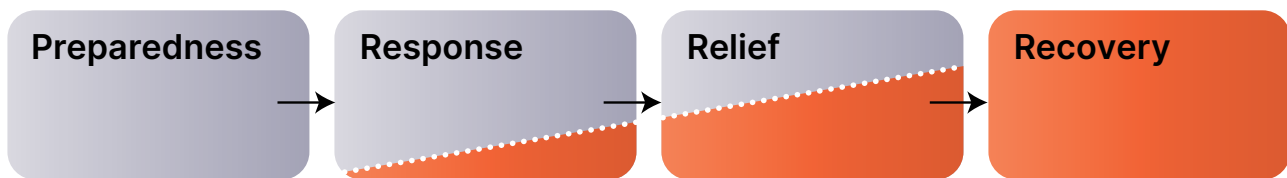
Figure 11. The recovery phase of the Continuum

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) defines recovery as:

'the restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and "build back better", to avoid or reduce future disaster risk.'

The recovery phase encompasses considerations for the **built** environment, the **social** environment, the **natural** environment and the **economic** environment.

The recovery phase of the Continuum (p. 10) comprises early recovery and longer-term recovery. The coordination arrangements in this Framework span near-term preparedness, response, relief and early recovery.

- **Early recovery** refers to *temporary, near-term measures* that support anticipated community needs, such as transitional shelter, services and supplies. During early recovery, the restoration of critical infrastructure would also be underway. This may occur alongside operational response and relief efforts.

- **Longer-term recovery** refers to the transition from the temporary measures established during early recovery to *more permanent, ongoing arrangements* that reflect and support community priorities. This may include the reconstruction of the built environment, and the restoration of community connections, relationships, networks and social structures.

States and territories are responsible for crisis management at the jurisdictional level, including recovery. The Australian Government provides financial assistance to states and territories for eligible recovery activities through programs such as the DRFA.[18]

Successful recovery relies on:

- understanding the context
- recognising complexity
- enabling community-led approaches
- ensuring coordination of all activities
- employing effective communication
- acknowledging and building capacity for future resilience.

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18 Details of the DRFA are available at: https://nema.gov.au/Disaster-Recovery-Funding-Arrangements-DRFA

Recovery planning

All national plans under the Framework are required to address early recovery considerations to ensure the Australian Government is prepared from the onset of crisis to support early recovery.[19]

The Crisis Recovery Coordination Plan supports Australian Government agencies to plan for recovery.

Longer-term recovery

As the Australian Government changes its focus from early recovery to longer-term recovery, more enduring arrangements may be required to support ongoing coordination of Australian Government activities, programs and strategic policy. Following a significant crisis, this may require establishment of special purpose or temporary mechanisms to coordinate the implementation of policy and programs by Australian, state and territory governments. The roles and responsibilities of government agencies and officials supporting recovery should be defined within those mechanisms.

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19 The National Principles for Disaster Recovery are outlined at:
   https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/national-principles-for-disaster-recovery/

Key legislation

Legislation	Description
National Emergency Declaration Act 2020	• The making of a NED signals to the Australian community – and to all levels of government across Australia – the severity of a crisis. It also provides clarity about the Commonwealth's role and the statutory powers available to the Australian Government ministers to handle a significant crisis. • A NED can be made for a period of up to 3 months, and can be extended by the Governor-General for periods up to 3 months. • The **Governor-General** may declare a national emergency, on advice of the Prime Minister, in certain circumstances, including if the **Prime Minister** is satisfied that an emergency (whether occurring in or outside Australia) is causing harm that is nationally significant in Australia or in an Australian offshore area. • **PM&C,** the **Department of Home Affairs** and **NEMA** are responsible for providing advice on operational and legal policy matters relevant to the Act, including preparing advice for the **Prime Minister** about making a declaration. The process for making a NED, including legal thresholds and consultation requirements, is outlined in the National Emergency Declaration Aide-Mémoire, maintained by PM&C.
Part IIIAAA of the Defence Act 1903 (Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority)	• Sets out of the statutory process for Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority (DFACA) 'Call Out' of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to protect Commonwealth interests or states and territories against 'domestic violence' as defined by the Act. Part IIIAAA is used in circumstances where the ADF may be required to use force. • The **Governor-General** may make a decision to call out the ADF on the advice of the authorising ministers, being the **Prime Minister, Minister for Defence** and **Attorney-General**. • Defence's policy framework for Part IIIAAA is the Defence Policy Guide: Threshold for call out of the Australian Defence Force and Guidelines for requesting support from the Australian Defence Force (Call Out) under Part IIIAAA of the *Defence Act 1903* by States and Territories. • Separately, Defence can provide assistance to civilian agencies where there is no contemplated use of force through Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC). The Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Policy and the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Manual are the policy frameworks for DACC.
Section 28 of the Defence Act 1903 (Reserve Call Out)	• Provides Defence access to additional human resources beyond the permanent forces and those Reservists who have volunteered to support a crisis response. • The **Minister responsible for Defence**, after consultation with the **Prime Minister**, may recommend the Reserve Call Out to the **Governor-General**. • The Reserve Call Out may not be an appropriate mechanism for responding to a crisis and is not tethered to a NED.
Biosecurity Act 2015	• The **Governor-General** may make a biosecurity emergency declaration if the **Minister responsible for Agriculture** is satisfied that the special powers are needed to deal with a plant or animal biosecurity emergency under Chapter 8 Part 1 of the Act. • **Minister responsible for Health** may exercise powers relevant to the management of a human health biosecurity risk under Chapter 8 Part 2 of the Act. • **Minister responsible for Agriculture** may exercise powers to manage biosecurity risks including monitoring, control and response during a biosecurity emergency period under Chapter 8 Part 1 of the Act. These may be exercised anywhere in the Australian territory.

Appendices

Appendix A
Designated Lead Ministers, Lead Coordinating Senior Officials and Australian Government Coordinating Agencies for identified hazards

Where a hazard is not identified, PM&C will work with NEMA and other relevant Australian Government agencies to identify an appropriate Australian Government Coordinating Agency, depending on where the impacts and consequences of the hazard primarily fall.

Identified hazards

Cyber Incidents

A cyber incident is a single or series of unwanted or unexpected event(s) that have the potential to impact the confidentiality, integrity or availability of a network or system or the information that it stores, processes or communicates. This may result in significant disruption to the functioning of government or provision of government services; critical infrastructure or the provision of essential services; or may require a coordinated national response. This may include unauthorised or malicious sharing of data, manipulation or destruction of critical data and software, disruptions to ICT networks or systems, and exploitation of networks to cause a physical effect. A response to a cyber incident may require coordination under the Framework as a result of the technical considerations of the event, such as those detailed under the CIMA, or following consideration of the broader consequences of the cyber incident.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism[20]
Australian Cyber Response Plan (AUSCYBERPLAN)	Minister responsible for Cyber Security	Department of Home Affairs (National Office of Cyber Security)	National Cyber Security Coordinator or other relevant Deputy Secretary, Department of Home Affairs	NCM IDETF

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20 Abbreviations are listed in Appendix C.

Domestic biosecurity crises

An incident where a pest or disease poses immediate threat to part(s) of Australia's economy, environment, or community that requires a whole-of-government response. This may include animal diseases; plant pests and diseases; and pests impacting on the environment or social amenity.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
Australian Government Biosecurity and Agricultural Response Plan (AUSBIOAGPLAN)	Minister responsible for Agriculture	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Deputy Secretary responsible for Biosecurity, DAFF	• NCM • National Management Group

Domestic energy supply crises

A domestic energy supply crisis that requires a whole-of-government response. This may include liquid fuel supply, natural gas supply or power supply.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
• National Liquid Fuels Emergency Response Plan (NLFERP) • Interruption to Gas Supply Process (ITGSP) • AEMO's Power System Emergency Management Plan (PSEMP)	Minister responsible for Energy	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	Deputy Secretary responsible for Energy, DCCEEW	• NCM • Liquid fuel – NOSEC • Natural gas – NGERAC • Power system emergency – NEMEMF

Domestic natural hazard disasters

A domestic rapid onset event that requires a whole-of-government response.
This may include bushfires, earthquakes, riverine floods, storms, tropical cyclones, storm surges, landslides, tsunamis, meteorite strikes or tornados.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN)	Minister responsible for Emergency Management	National Emergency Management Agency	Deputy Coordinator General, Emergency Management and Response, NEMA	• NCM • CCOSC

Domestic public health crises

A domestic public health incident that requires a whole-of-government response. Examples may include an influenza pandemic or a serious infectious disease outbreak or a hazardous material incident with nationally significant human health consequences (excl. domestic terrorist incidents).

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
National Health Emergency Response Arrangements (NHERA)	Minister responsible for Health and Age Care	Department of Health and Aged Care	Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Aged Care	• NCM • AHPC

Domestic security-related incidents (excl. terrorist incidents)

A domestic security incident, other than terrorism, that requires a whole-of-government response. This may include widespread violent civil unrest and threats (to public places, members of the public or the Parliament).

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
Australian Government Domestic Security Crisis Plan (AUSSECPLAN)	Minister responsible for Home Affairs	Department of Home Affairs	Deputy Secretary responsible for National Security and Resilience, Department of Home Affairs	• NCM

Domestic terrorist incidents

A domestic terrorist incident (suspected or declared) that requires a whole-of-government response. A terrorist incident is an act, or threat to commit an act, that is done with the intention to coerce or influence the public or any government by intimidation to advance a political, religious or ideological cause, and the act causes:
- death, serious harm or endangers a person
- serious damage to property
- a serious risk to the health or safety of the public
- the serious interference with, disruption, or destruction, of critical infrastructure.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
National Counter Terrorism Plan (NCTP)	Minister responsible for Home Affairs	Department of Home Affairs	Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator	• NCM

Incidents involving an offshore petroleum facility in Commonwealth waters

Incidents may include any non-security related event that occurs at, or has a direct link to, an offshore petroleum facility in Commonwealth waters (e.g. fire, oil spill) and requires a whole-of-government response.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
Offshore Petroleum Incident Coordination Framework	Minister responsible for Resources	Department of Industry, Science and Resources	Deputy Secretary responsible for Resources, DISR	• NCM • OPICC

International crises

An international incident that requires an Australian Government response. This may include natural hazard disasters, humanitarian crises, terrorist acts, major transport incidents, civil unrest, overseas health emergencies or outbreaks, kidnapping of Australians overseas and chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incidents which impact or may impact Australians or Australia's national interest.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
International Crisis Management Framework (ICMF)	Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Deputy Secretary responsible for Consular and Crisis Management, DFAT	• IDETF • NCM

Maritime terrorist incidents within the Australian Security Forces Authority Area

A maritime terrorist incident (suspected or declared) within the Australian Security Forces Authority Areas that requires a whole-of-government response, including piracy, robbery and violence at sea. The Security Forces Authority Area is synonymous with Australia's Search and Rescue Region. The Australian Government has direct responsibility for offshore maritime terrorism prevention, response and recovery, from the territorial sea baseline to the outer boundary of Australia's Security Forces Authority Area. Maritime terrorist incidents may include:

- attacks on fixed infrastructure
- attacks against vessels
- attacks on commercial interests or
- incidents mounted from, or through, the maritime environment.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
Maritime Counter-Terrorism Response Manual	Minister responsible for Home Affairs	Australian Border Force (Maritime Border Command)	Commander Maritime Border Command	• NCM

Radiological/nuclear incidents (excl. domestic terrorist incidents)

A radiological or nuclear incident that requires a whole-of-government response.
It may be caused by ionising radiation in emergency exposure situations.
An emergency exposure situation arises as a result of an accident, a malicious act, or any other unexpected event, and requires prompt action in order to avoid or reduce adverse consequences.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
Australian Government Radiological and Nuclear Events Plan (AUSRNEPLAN)	Minister responsible for Health and Aged Care	Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	Chief Radiation Health Scientist/ Chief Executive Officer, ARPANSA	• NCM

Space weather events

Space weather events are global, and may have significant national impacts for Australia that require a whole-of-government response. Space weather may disrupt many of Australia's critical infrastructure assets, such as the electricity grid, Position, Navigation and Timing (PNT) systems, internet connectivity and satellite and radio communication systems. Many industries and government sectors may be impacted if there are interruptions to communications and navigation, and a loss of power.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
Australian Government Space Weather Plan (AUSSWEPLAN)	Minister responsible for Emergency Management	National Emergency Management Agency	Deputy Coordinator General, Emergency Management and Response, NEMA	• NCM

Transport incidents within Australia, the Australian Search and Rescue Region, or the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone

Transport incidents (maritime, aviation, road and rail), other than terrorism, that require a whole-of-government response. This may include crashes of, and search and rescue efforts for, commercial aircraft and vessels (within Australia or the Australian Search and Rescue Region), maritime environmental emergencies (including maritime casualties, oil and/or hazardous and noxious substance spills within the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone) stemming from these incidents, and may also include major disruptions to road and rail infrastructure which impact on supply chains across multiple jurisdictions.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
The Australian Government Coordination Arrangements for Maritime Environment Emergencies National Search and Rescue Manual	Minister responsible for Transport	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts	Deputy Secretary responsible for Transport, DITRDCA	• NCM • NPSCC • APG • MESCC

Novel or ambiguous hazard

A novel or ambiguous hazard is a hazard that has not been anticipated, and cannot be responded to using any existing Australian Government crisis plans.

National plan(s)	Lead Minister	Australian Government Coordinating Agency	Lead Coordinating Senior Official	Coordination mechanism
N/A	Minister responsible for Emergency Management (as the default until such time that a more appropriate Lead Minister is agreed)	National Emergency Management Agency (as the default until such time that a more appropriate Australian Government Coordinating Agency is agreed)	Deputy Coordinator-General, Emergency Management and Response, NEMA (as the default until such time that a more appropriate Lead Coordinating Senior Official is agreed)	• NCM

Appendix B

Cross-sectoral all-hazards plans and arrangements

Description	Plans and arrangements	Responsible agency
Catastrophic crises	Australian Government Catastrophic Crisis Plan (AUSCATPLAN)	National Emergency Management Agency
Reception and coordination of international assistance International offers of assistance may vary significantly, arise from any source and be made to any Australian Government agency. Any offers of assistance received should be appropriately coordinated, considered and actioned as required to support jurisdictions and the Australian Government's crisis management priorities.	Australian Government Reception of International Assistance Plan (AUSRIAPLAN)	National Emergency Management Agency
Recovery	Crisis Recovery Coordination Plan	National Emergency Management Agency
Request for non-financial assistance from states, territories and offshore territories State and territory governments have responsibility for coordinating and planning for the response to and recovery from a disaster within their borders. When the total resources (government, community and commercial) of an affected jurisdiction cannot reasonably cope with the needs of the situation, the nominated official can seek non-financial assistance from the Australian Government under COMDISPLAN.	Australian Government Disaster Response Plan (COMDISPLAN)	National Emergency Management Agency
Provision of Australian Government organised physical assistance to overseas countries following a disaster	Australian Government Overseas Assistance Plan (AUSASSISTPLAN)	National Emergency Management Agency Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Reception into Australia of Australian citizens and permanent residents, and their immediate dependents, and approved foreign nationals evacuated from overseas	Australian Government Plan for the Reception of Australian Citizens and Approved Foreign Nationals Evacuated from Overseas (AUSRECEPLAN)	National Emergency Management Agency
Assessment, repatriation and provision of care for Australians and other approved persons injured or killed overseas in mass casualty crises	Australian Government Response Plan for Overseas Mass Casualty Incidents (OSMASSCASPLAN)	National Emergency Management Agency
Manage the risk posed by re-entering space debris which may impact Australia	Australian Government Space Re-entry Debris Plan (AUSSPREDPLAN)	National Emergency Management Agency

Appendix C

Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
AGDRP	Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment
AHPC	Australian Health Protection Committee
AIDR	Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
ANZCTC	Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee
APG	Aviation Policy Group
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
AVTOP	Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment
CAC	Crisis Arrangements Committee
CASP	Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning
CCOSC	Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee
CC	Crisis Centre (DFAT)
CCT	Australian Government Crisis Coordination Team
CIMA	Cyber Incident Management Arrangements for Australian Governments
CTCC	Counter-Terrorism Coordination Centre
DACC	Defence Assistance to the Civil Community
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DFACA	Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DISR	Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Term	Definition
DITRDCA	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
DRA	Disaster Recovery Allowance
DRFA	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements
GWO	DFAT Global Watch Office
IDETF	Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force
ITGSP	Interruption to Gas Supply Process
MESCC	Maritime Emergency Strategic Coordination Committee
NCM	National Coordination Mechanism
NCM-AUSGOV	Australian Government National Coordination Mechanism
NCSC	National Cyber Security Committee
NED	National emergency declaration
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NEMEMF	National Electricity Market Emergency Management Forum
NGERAC	National Gas Emergency Response Advisory Committee
NJCOP	National Joint Common Operating Picture
NLFERP	National Liquid Fuels Emergency Response Plan
NOSEC	National Oil Supplies Emergency Committee
NPSCC	National Plan Strategic Coordination Committee
NSC	National Security Committee of Cabinet
NSR	National Situation Room
OPICC	Offshore Petroleum Incident Coordination Committee
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PNT	Position, Navigation and Timing
PSEMP	Power System Emergency Management Plan
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction