



# STATE RECOVERY PLAN

COVID-19

Version 1

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State Recovery Coordinator: Graham Swift  
[graham.swift@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:graham.swift@dfes.wa.gov.au)

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## An Initial State Recovery Plan COVID-19

### Introduction

Recovery is defined as ‘the support of emergency affected communities in the reconstruction and restoration of physical infrastructure, the environment and community, psychosocial and economic wellbeing’ (s.3 EM Act).

COVID-19 worldwide is resulting in serious and widespread illness and leading to a large number of deaths and will lead to the disruption of the normal functioning of society for a prolonged period within Western Australia. Recovery from a Pandemic of this nature is unprecedented in modern times. The nature of the hazard has serious global, national, state and local implications. There will be challenges in recovering from this hazard that have not been observed previously and difficult to foresee. The State Recovery Coordination Group (SRCG) will utilise the best information available at the time to guide its recovery plans through this event. Within the context of COVID-19, this Plan will establish the overarching principles to be employed to ensure the State is best placed to support and return the community to an acceptable norm post COVID-19. It will ensure that all recovery efforts within the state of Western Australia are coordinated at the highest level whilst being managed and delivered within the context of existing state emergency management legislation and frameworks.

### Purpose

This is an initial Plan which establishes the framework and principles of the State’s approach to recovery from the COVID-19 event. The *Recovery Plan* will necessarily evolve when the understanding of the impacts become clearer and the recovery needs evolve.

This Plan is to direct the recovery phase of COVID-19. The purpose of recovery activities is to:

- assist recovery at a social, built, economic and natural environment level;
- ensure that recovery activities are community-led;
- ensure that available government and non-government support to affected communities is targeted;
- assist communities to rebuild in a way that enhances social, economic and environmental values where possible, and improve resilience of the relevant communities;

COVID-19 is most likely to impact the social and economic environments. Therefore, this Plan will place most of its focus on those two critical dimensions.

## Objectives

The three main objectives of recovery planning for this event are to:

1. Establish and maintain comprehensive State level situational awareness of the impacts of COVID-19 within the State focusing on the social and economic dimensions.
2. Ensure that all recovery activities across the state are coordinated and wherever possible delivered in accordance with existing emergency management frameworks and local arrangements.
3. Transition communities to a post recovery state.

## Principles

This Plan will follow the underpinning principles of emergency management:

- risk management approach;
- shared responsibility for resilience;
- graduated approach;
- all agencies coordinated and integrated approach;
- community engagement;
- integrated information management; and
- continuous improvement

## Scope

This Plan covers the recovery arrangements within the geographical boundaries of Western Australia, it describes the required coordination of activities from a procedural and operational perspective to implement recovery within Western Australia.

The following is within the scope of this Initial State Recovery Plan:

- develop and maintain strategic and operational situational awareness of the recovery impacts of COVID-19;
- advice to state government on strategic recovery issues;
- coordination of State Recovery activities across local governments and districts;
- introduce new processes to support existing frameworks;
- powers and authorities of *Emergency Management Act* as they relate to recovery;
- engagement with the Federal Government;
- engagement with peak bodies and representatives ;
- recommendations to the State Emergency Coordinator (SEC) and State Emergency Coordination Group (SECG); and
- support of Commonwealth initiated repatriation programs of WA citizens overseas if required.

## Out of Scope

- All response activities.
- Indirect impacts for example public disobedience.
- Assessment of the quantum of economic impacts of the event.
- Lessons management.
- Financial management.

## Assumptions

- Recovery from a Pandemic will require a whole of government approach and will be coordinated under a State recovery framework.
- Commonwealth roles and responsibilities established in Response may require ongoing support during recovery.
- Federal, State and Local Governments (LGs) are likely to be equally impacted by COVID-19 including the levels of service they are able to provide.
- International recovery support will also be impacted by COVID-19.
- Where existing LG plans rely on neighbouring LGs for support those arrangements are unlikely to be effective.
- This Plan will primarily focus on the social and economic impacts, not on the natural and built impacts.
- LGs have risk based plans that are up to date and relevant to support them in the context of COVID-19.
- Transition from response to recovery will not be clear cut and may be occurring at different phases across the State at the same time and over an extended timeframe.
- LGs have good situational awareness of COVID-19.
- Western Australia Local Government Association is recognised as the peak body for local governments within WA and will form a key role for communication between State LGs.
- All members of the SRCG will be responsible for informing both this Plan and future recovery planning and their specific stakeholder groups.
- The Australian government may introduce a national recovery framework which may influence future State Recovery plans and arrangements.
- The Plan is based on the current worse case credible scenarios.
- At a State level, issues associated with individuals will be referred to LGs for inclusion in their recovery response.
- Traditional levels of escalation and support from other jurisdictions or Commonwealth agencies should be considered unavailable in planning.

## Risks/threats/issues

The SRCG will be undertaking comprehensive risk analysis, which will be utilised in developing future State Recovery Plans as impacts evolve.

## Situational Awareness

Current considered worse case credible scenario is 25% infected with 0.2-2.0% mortality rate (Department of Health). Consideration also needs to be given to the number of people that will be absent from the workforce to provide caring responsibilities.

## Recovery Phases (State Human Epidemic)

### *Alert*

This stage is activated when the state of WA experiences advice that community or sector wide effects of COVID-19 are likely and will require a significant and coordinated recovery response.

During this stage, the State Recovery Coordinator monitors the situation to determine if the emergency can be dealt with at the local or district level, or if further action needs to be taken, as outlined in this Plan, this includes recommending to the State Emergency Coordinator (SEC) the nomination of a State Recovery Controller.

The State Recovery Coordinator will ensure:

- High level coordination
- Stakeholder engagement
- Increased presence at strategic meetings
- Identify requirement for additional resources

This Initial State Recovery Plan reflects the State being in the Alert phase.

### *Standby*

This stage is activated when the Alert stage warrants preparatory activities in readiness for a recovery response. Depending on the situation the State Recovery Coordinator may undertake the following actions:

- Instil public confidence
- Increased situational awareness
- Commence communication lines
- State Recovery planning procedures
- Recruitment of additional resources
- Increased engagement with LGs
- Advice to the SECG

It is anticipated that the next State Recovery Plan will reflect this phase, as many of the above actions have commenced.

### *Response*

This stage is activated when an emergency response to a human epidemic is considered necessary by the State Human Epidemic Coordinator (SEHC). During this time the State Recovery Coordinator may undertake the following actions:

- Activate the SRCG
- Maintain situational awareness
- Advice to state government on strategic recovery issues
- Coordination of State Recovery activities across local governments and districts

A more comprehensive Recovery Plan informed by better knowledge about the impacts of the event will guide recovery actions.

### *Stand down*

This will ensure that all elements of the recovery phase have been completed, documented and debriefed.

### **State Recovery Controller**

If extraordinary arrangements are required for a specific emergency, the State Recovery Coordinator may, in consultation with the SEC, recommend that the Premier appoint a State Recovery Controller and identify any legislative support and resources required.

The State Recovery Coordinator (or State Recovery Controller if appointed) reports directly to the Premier/Minister as determined by the Government, and will keep the SEC and Controlling Agency/HMA informed.

The appointment of a State Recovery Controller will usually occur when an emergency affects several communities, is ongoing, requires State level assistance to resolve issues and needs a regional coordination approach.

It is recommended and preferred that the appointment of the State Recovery Controller is a dedicated full time appointment to ensure the appropriate level of service delivery is achieved.

### **State Recovery Controller – Essential Skills and Knowledge<sup>1</sup>**

The State Recovery Controller is responsible for ensuring the provision of coordinated recovery support to emergency affected communities through the coordination of resources made available by public authorities and other persons.

For the State Recovery Controller position the following skills, knowledge and attributes are desirable:

- bring high level experience in collaboration and have experience of managing within an emergency context, with a focus on recovery;

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<sup>1</sup> State Recovery Controller Guide- Endorsed by SEMC April 2019

- bring highly developed interpersonal skills and be able to engage across all levels of government, all recovery stakeholders and with all members of the community; and
- high level skills in partnership development and collaborative approaches, recognising, supporting and building on community, individual and organisational capacity.

The State Recovery Coordinator is preparing advice to government to consider the identifications of a suitable person to be appointed as the State Recovery Controller (and deputy) to assist with the engagement of this person and their transition into the role.

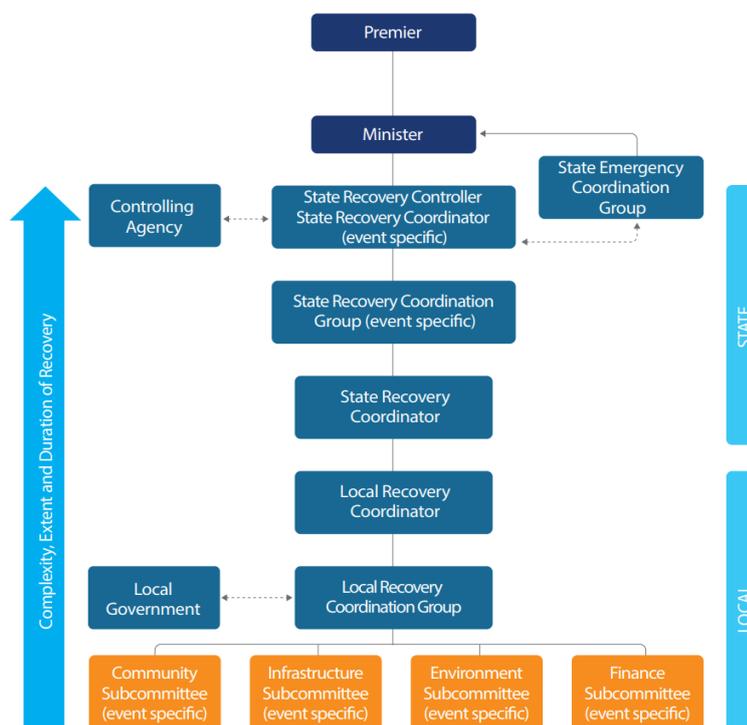
### **Role and Function of the State Recovery Coordination Group (SRCG)**

The SRCG is responsible for State level recovery coordination and facilitation in complex or prolonged recovery operations. The SRCG has been activated to address COVID-19 recovery activities and will meet as required. The role of the SRCG will be to:

- lead the development of a State Level Recovery Plan specifically for the emergency and coordinate the most effective use of government and non-government resources to implement that plan;
- identify a public authority with lead responsibility for each of the social, built environment, economic and natural environment aspects of recovery;
- advise the Premier, Minister Controlling Agency/HMA and the SEC on the conduct and progress of recovery;
- identify and recommend, if necessary, specific assistance measures for consideration by the State and Federal government; and
- advise the local government(s) of the State Recovery progress to resolving State level recovery issues.

### **Structure**

The State Emergency Management Framework establishes a Recovery Coordination Structure (diagram 1). It is considered that this structure will need to be adapted to provide for effective coordination of an event with state-wide, community-wide impacts such as COVID-19. The recommended structure for COVID-19 will be modified to include District level recovery within the Recovery Coordination Structure.



*Diagram 1: Recovery Coordination Structure*

The formation of a State Recovery Coordinator business unit is necessary to enable the objectives of this Plan to be achieved, and will be directed by the State Recovery Coordinator (appendix 1).

### Spontaneous Volunteers

Spontaneous volunteers seeking to respond to the recovery efforts associated with the COVID 19 pandemic will be directed to follow a “local people responding in their local community” approach. This message will encourage people to seek opportunities to help within their immediate LG area and not move throughout the State. People wishing to assist with recovery efforts will be directed to their LG or closest Volunteer Resource Centre or Community Resource Centre to identify volunteering opportunities.

The State will refer to the following documents to assist in guiding a spontaneous volunteering response by the community:

1. [https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus)
2. [Community Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers \(Handbook 12: Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection\)](#) by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, published by Australian Government – Attorney-General’s Department
3. [Spontaneous Volunteer Management Resource Kit: Helping to manage spontaneous volunteers in emergencies](#) by the Australian Red Cross,

published by the Australian Government – Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

4. [Volunteer Resource Centres and Volunteering WA Hubs](#) on Volunteering WA Website ([www.volunteeringwa.org.au](http://www.volunteeringwa.org.au))
5. Western Australian Community Resource Network Website ([www.crc.net.au](http://www.crc.net.au))

### Supporting Plans

The following Support Plans have been identified as possibly being required and developed to support future State Recovery Plans as needed:

- Communication Plan
- Stakeholder Plan
- Commonwealth Engagement Plan
- Community Sector Engagement Plan
- Financial Management Plan (Federal, State, LGA, Donations)
- Vulnerable Communities Plan
  - Remote Aboriginal Communities
  - Aged/Disabilities/CaLD groups

## Appendix 1: State Recovery Coordinator Business Unit

