Emergency Management Policy

Classification:	Infrastructure Policy
Last Reviewed:	August 2026 (Res. 63/2027)
Next Review Date:	August 2030
Responsible Officer:	Director Infrastructure & Operations
Approved by:	Council Resolution
Applicable Legislation:	Local Government Act 1999, Emergency Management Act 2004
Related Policies, Procedures and Standards:	DC Robe Emergency Management Plan

1. PURPOSE

Emergencies have the potential to disrupt the strategic and operational activities of Council and adversely impact communities. The roles of local government in emergency management are informed by the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP), the Local Government Act 1999 and the Local Government Emergency Management Framework (LGEMF).

The purpose of the District Council of Robe (Council) Emergency Management Policy is to define roles and responsibilities in emergency management based on a comprehensive approach (Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery) and ensure that Council:

- Contributes to South Australia's emergency management arrangements based on available capacity and resources;
- Prepares and maintains appropriate emergency management documents, registers, and records;
- Participates in emergency management training and exercises (internal and cross-sector);
- Manages risks to council and council employees; and
- Maintains safe working practices and applies good decision-making during emergency management activities.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to Council in exercising powers and functions under the various Acts and agreements to which it is a party in the State of South Australia along with internal, local and zone emergency management plans and arrangements.

This policy does not apply to a person responding to an incident in their role as a registered volunteer with external agencies (e.g. SA Country Fire Service or SA State Emergency Service).

The scope of emergency management activities is limited to those listed in Section 5 of this policy.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Given the changing climate and increasing frequency and severity of emergencies, Australian governments have recognised that a national, coordinated and cooperative effort is required to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies. The Council recognises the shared responsibility to help protect and assist its community to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from disasters.

Council's emergency management arrangements align with the South Australian emergency arrangements with an all-hazards and comprehensive approach, reflecting the collective responsibility of all sectors of the community (state and local government, the business and non-government sectors, and individuals), and recognising that effective arrangements require a coordinated approach.

Council is committed to contributing to emergency management with local, state and federal stakeholders and seeks to:

- Foster collaboration across the layers of government and between organisations to share best practices and resources;
- Highlight emergency management issues, opportunities and policy initiatives to build community awareness, preparedness and resilience;
- Integrate emergency management measures into standard practice to enhance organisational, community and cross-governmental resilience;
- Identify funding sources and allocate resources to implement emergency management and climate-related initiatives; and
- Collaborate with and provide coordinated support to emergency management agencies whilst responding to and recovering from emergencies.

This policy acknowledges the interrelationship between climate change and emergency management. Climate change is expected to increase exposure to disaster risk owing to more frequent and intense natural hazards.

Actions taken by Council to mitigate climate risk, and adapt to the impacts of climate change contribute towards disaster risk reduction. Similarly, efforts to reduce disaster risk, build resilience for emergencies and strengthen the capacity and capability to respond and recover to emergencies, are important climate change adaptation measures.

4. LEGISLATION

The Emergency Management Act 2004 provides the authority for the SEMP which details the role of all stakeholders, including local government, in emergency management.

Section 7 (c) of the Local Government Act 1999 requires council to provide for the welfare, well-being and interests of individuals and groups within its community. Section 7(d) requires council to take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards.

Section 8 of the Local Government Act 1999 indicates that council must give due weight, in all its plans, policies and activities to regional, state and national objectives and strategies, including consideration of the objectives and strategies of the SEMP.

5. APPROACH TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency management in the Council is enabled and supported by legislation and delegations.

Council will undertake the following roles and responsibilities in accordance with the comprehensive emergency management model outlined in the SEMP and LGEMF:

5.1 Prevention

South Australian councils make a significant contribution to disaster mitigation and risk reduction; however, it is often a by-product of other strategic priorities and council activities,

rather than for the purpose of prevention. Examples include establishing risk registers, asset management plans, strategic planning processes, and activities such as tree management and waterway management. This policy incorporates this business-as-usual contribution and provides additional considerations for Council's contribution to disaster prevention and mitigation activities.

Council is committed to understanding disaster risk, preventing or reducing the likelihood of a disaster event occurring and understanding the consequences of an event should it eventuate and will:

- Collaborate with local emergency management stakeholders, including in the Zone Emergency Management Committee (ZEMC) and Bushfire Management Committee (BMC), and proactively contribute to the identification, prevention and mitigation of emergency risks.
- Contribute to disaster resilience by developing, adapting and maintaining council-owned assets and infrastructure that avoids the creation of new risk, reduces existing risks and manages residual risk
- Partner with local stakeholders in addressing priority emergency risks and seek cost-effective measures to mitigate the effects of emergencies within council's area

5.2 Preparedness

Council takes proactive measures to build resilience, undertake planning, and engage in training and exercises in preparation for emergency events. To prepare for emergencies, Council will:

- Provide representation on the BMC, ZEMC and contribute to zone emergency management planning
- Contribute to local, zone and regional emergency planning and preparedness measures (e.g. Zone Emergency Management Plans, Bushfire Management Plans, Regional Public Health Plans) within available resources
- Integrate emergency management into existing plans, processes and decision-making arrangements (e.g. strategic, community and asset management plans, risk frameworks, budgeting, asset management plan)
- Undertake business continuity and workplace planning to reduce the likelihood and impact of emergencies and outages
- Promote public awareness of emergency management risks and issues, policy initiatives and preparedness actions that contribute to community resilience and readiness
- Identify, maintain and prepare arrangements for existing capabilities and capacity that contribute to emergency response, relief and recovery
- Determine council training needs and ensure relevant employees participate in i-Responda and emergency management training
- Proactively engage and collaborate with local emergency management response and recovery partners to practice the implementation of council and interagency plans
- Identify, understand and negotiate financial arrangements to ensure systems and procedures capture relevant evidentiary requirements

Council will establish relevant plans and documentation including:

- Council Emergency Management Plan that describes the role of council in emergency management and the strategies and actions that council will take to implement this policy

- An internal Council i-Responda Plan that describes the scope of incident operations for council and how council will organise itself and take practical actions immediately before, during, and immediately after an emergency incident
- A Council i-Responda Employee Register that:
    - Records suitable and interested employees that may be requested to provide emergency support
    - Confirms employees are suitably trained to undertake identified capabilities
    - Does not obligate any council employee to be listed on the register, nor obligate any council employee listed on the register to respond to a particular incident
    - Ensures council employees who may be requested to support an emergency response participate relevant i-Responda training
- A Council i-Responda Plant and Equipment Register that records:
    - Council-owned vehicles, plant and equipment that may be requested by a Control Agency for emergency support operations
    - Persons on the Council i-Responda Employee Register who are competent to operate the various items of plant and equipment
- A Council Recovery Plan that describes the roles that council will undertake during Recovery including consideration of the role of council and other agencies in recovery that best meet community needs and avoid duplication of effort.

5.3 Response

When requested to support an emergency response, Council will:

- Enact council's i-Responda Plan and ensure any council support to emergencies is provided in accordance with the i-Responda Framework principles, the Council i-Responda Employee Register and the Council i-Responda Plant and Equipment Register
- Consider establishing a Council i-Responda Management Team (CIMT) to coordinate activities such as the two-way flow of information; prioritising, recording and actioning requests when safe to do so; maintaining welfare needs of CIMT and all support staff; and amplification of messages to the community and the CEO
- Liaise with the Control Agency to obtain information about the emergency situation, risk, lines of communication and incident management structures
- Provide representation (normally a liaison officer) in the Zone Emergency Support Team (ZEST) or Control Agency Incident Management Team (IMT) to exchange information, contribute resources and local knowledge, including about impacts and consequences
- Make assessments and decisions on council involvement in line with the i-Responda Framework to ensure that requests and activities are undertaken in a consistent manner that maximises safety and minimises risk exposure
- Maintain records of council support, decisions, actions and activities in line with existing policies, procedures, risk and work, health and safety systems
- Ensure council employees have council command and supervision and robust lines of communication to ensure oversight of their health and safety
- Retain the right not to release, or to withdraw council employee participation in an emergency event as determined by the CEO, Council Commander or delegate
- Uphold regard to the arrangements of the LGA Asset Mutual Fund, the LGA Workers Compensation Scheme and LGA Mutual Liability Scheme, including the i-Responda Risk Management and Protections Guide
- Seek to understand impacts and consequences of the emergency to prepare for restoration of council assets and infrastructure and potential recovery needs

Provide timely, clear and consistent communications to varying stakeholders through established channels.

5.4 Recovery

Council is committed to supporting recovery agencies and its communities during recovery within its capacity and resources. If Council's area is impacted by emergency events, Council will:

- Enact council's Recovery Plan
- Notify the State Recovery Office (StateDisasterRecovery@sa.gov.au or 1800 302 787) that a natural disaster has caused damage in the council's area and provide an overview of the damage, community impacts and broader consequences
- Provide representation on Local Recovery Committees, and share information about impacts and consequences, resources and local knowledge
- Participate, represent and provide council leadership at local community meetings to ensure recovery actions are community-driven and promote the activities being undertaken
- Identify assets, infrastructure and systems that may be rebuilt to a more resilient standard and or build back better
- Collaborate with local recovery service providers to secure grants and advocate for funding to deliver recovery actions
- Promote public awareness of ongoing service outages and actions being implemented by council
- Amplify key messages and recovery opportunities from local recovery service providers to build community awareness of recovery support offerings
- Consider appointing a council recovery team to support coordination and with other stakeholders address social, economic, built and natural asset recovery across the initial, short term and long-term needs

6. COMMUNICATION

The media Spokesperson for council during an emergency will be the Mayor or the Chief Executive Officer. Council members do not have an operational role during an emergency but are kept up-to-date of the incident response and recovery by the Chief Executive Officer.

7. IMPLEMENTATION/DELEGATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer has the delegated authority to implement this policy and to:

- Approve, amend and review any procedures that shall be consistent with this Policy including but not limited to Council's Emergency Management Plan, i-Responda Plan and Recovery Plan
- Make legislative, formatting, nomenclature or other minor changes to the Policy during the period of its currency.

8. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

Capability	The ability to achieve a defined outcome applying a defined set of skills and assets.
Capacity	The ability to deploy a defined capability at a sustained level over a defined period of time.
Comprehensive approach	The "comprehensive approach" to emergency management considers planning for all phases of emergencies - prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Control	The overall direction of emergency management activities in an emergency. Authority for control is established in the SEMP and carries the responsibility for tasking organisations in accordance with the needs of the situation.
Control Agency	An agency that exercises control of an emergency as designated by the SEMP.
Council i-Responda Plan	The Council i-Responda Plan (previously Incident Operations Manual) describes how a council will organise itself and take actions immediately before, during, and immediately after an emergency incident. It defines the scope of incident operations for the council, provides delegation and authority for Council Commander(s) and describes arrangements.
Emergency	An event that causes or threatens to cause the death of, or injury or other damage to the health of, any person; or the destruction of, or damage to, any property; or a disruption to essential services or to services usually enjoyed by the community; or harm to the environment, or to flora or fauna.
Emergency Management	A range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment. The organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies. Emergency management involves the plans, structures and arrangements established to bring together government and non-government agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to deal with the emergency needs including prevention, risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery
Emergency Support	Provision of resources supporting Control Agency response.
Functional Support Group (FSG)	A grouping of participating organisations coordinated by a lead agency that performs a functional role as part of the State Emergency Centre arrangements to support response and recovery operations for an emergency.
Incident Management	The processes, decisions and actions taken to resolve an emergency incident and support recovery that will enable the community to return to normality.
Incident Management Team (IMT)	A group of Control Agency incident management personnel including an Incident Controller, established for incident management.
i-Responda	The approach applied within the South Australian local government sector to prepare for and respond to requests for support during emergencies.
Local Government Association South Australia (LGA)	LGA is a voluntary membership-based organisation providing councils with access to services, resources and support.
LGA Mutual	South Australian Local Government Mutual Risk Schemes and Services delivered in partnership by LGA Mutual Liability Scheme (LGAMLS), LGA Workers Compensation Scheme (LGAWCS), and LGA Asset Mutual Fund (LGAAMF).
LG Emergency Management Framework (LGEMF)	LGA's emergency management framework outlining the broad roles of the South Australian local government sector in emergency management.

Local Government Functional Support Group (LGFSG)	The FSG comprised of LGA as the Lead Agency and all 68 Councils and Regional Local Government Associations as participating organisations, performing functional roles and capability that support the agencies responsible for managing and coordinating emergency response and recovery.
Preparedness	All activities undertaken in advance of the occurrence of an incident to decrease the impact, extent and severity of the incident and to ensure more effective response activities.
Prevention	Undertaking of activities to understand disaster risk and reduce the likelihood of a disaster event occurring or the consequences of an event should it eventuate.
Recovery	The process of restoring or improving the livelihood and health, and the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of a disaster-affected community. It is a complex process that provides an opportunity to enhance community resilience and to 'build back better' to avoid or reduce future emergency/disaster risk.
Relief	Provision of material aid and emergency medical care necessary to save and preserve human lives and enable families to meet their basic needs for shelter, clothing, water, and food (including the means to prepare food).
Resilience	The readiness and ability to withstand, adapt, respond or recover from adversity across many remits such as an individual level, to teams, organisations, community, assets, infrastructure, environment, economy, systems.
Response	Measures taken in anticipation of, during or immediately after an emergency to ensure that the effect of the emergency is minimised and that affected individuals are given immediate relief and support.
State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)	The plan outlining South Australia's emergency management arrangements developed and maintained by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website: www.robe.sa.gov.au

Royal Circus, Robe SA 5276

Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request. Email council@robe.sa.gov.au

Any grievances in relation to this policy or its application should be forwarded in writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer of Council.

10. POLICY REVIEW

This policy may be amended at any time and must be reviewed at least every four years since its adoption (or latest amendment).