

2.3.12: PROVISION OF COUNCIL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY SERVICES IN EMERGENCIES

Administration Policy

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Port Augusta City Council recognises the shared responsibility that it has to assist its community to respond to and recover from disasters and works together with the emergency services by making available its resources to help protect its community.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define how the Port Augusta City Council will support the emergency services in responding to an emergency.

2.2 Scope

Support refers to:

- a) arrangements that will allow the participation of Councils staff and associated use of Council equipment;
- b) the availability of Council employees who agree to participate;
- c) the availability of Council owned plant and equipment; and
- d) the scope of works that might be undertaken.

2.3 Definitions

Council staff means Council employees and within this policy does not include any person who separately undertakes duties as a registered emergency service volunteer (e.g. CFS firefighter or SES volunteer).

2.4 Strategic Reference

4. We Care

- 4.3 Value, protect and enhance the quality of our natural and built environment.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

Given the increasing regularity and severity of natural disasters, Australian Governments have recognised that a national, coordinated and cooperative effort is required to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters.

In consideration of this National approach the Port Augusta City Council recognises the shared responsibility that it has to help protect and assist its community to respond to and recover from disasters.

3.2 Legislative Context

Section 7(c) of the *Local Government Act 1999* provides that a function of a Council is to provide for the welfare, well-being and interests of individuals and groups within its community.

Section 7 (d) of the *Local Government Act 1999* also provides that a function of a Council is to take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards.

Council's link to the State emergency management arrangements is through the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). The SEMP is prepared pursuant to Section 9 of the *Emergency Management Act 2004*, which lists Councils as 'Participating Organisations' to six of the thirteen Functional Services that are established under the SEMP.

Functional Services are groupings of participating agencies coordinated by a lead agency that perform a functional role as part of the State Emergency Management Plan arrangements to support response and recovery operations for an emergency. This policy has been prepared within the context of supporting the emergency services in emergencies.

3.3 Preparedness

3.3.1 *Arrangements and communication*

Council will endeavour to meet periodically (at least annually) with the relevant emergency services to confirm critical coordinator arrangements. These will include:

- a) contact protocols;
- b) details of Council resources that could be made available;
- c) the arrangements for accessing such resources; and
- d) the scope of work that could be performed.

3.3.2 *Availability of Council Employees*

To support this policy the Council will establish and maintain an 'Employee Emergency Response Support Register'. The Council will ensure that the employees that are listed on the Register are adequately trained:

- a) to operate the plant and equipment that might be required to support an emergency response; and
- b) in work, health and safety procedures that are pertinent to staying safe in an emergency.

Council will:

- c) identify relevant employees who are interested in participating in Council response(s) to emergency support requests under this policy and list such employees on the Employee Emergency Response Support Register;
- d) not obligate any Council employee to be listed on the Employee Emergency Response Support Register, nor obligate any Council employee listed on the register to respond to a particular incident;
- e) ensure all Council employees who will be required to operate Council vehicles or plant and equipment undertake the i-Responda program every three years;
- f) Council employees who are on the Emergency Response Support Register are provided awareness training on the provisions of this policy annually;
- g) reserve the right, in accordance with the i-Responda framework, not to release Council employees to support an emergency event should extenuating circumstances exist (as deemed by the CEO).

3.3.3 *Availability of Council Plant and Equipment*

Likewise the Council will establish and maintain an 'Emergency Services Plant and Equipment Register' which will identify Council owned plant and equipment that can be made available to the emergency services for the purpose of being used in an emergency response operation. Attaching to the Register will be the terms and conditions of availability and use of the plant and equipment.

Council will:

- a) provide a list of vehicles, plant and equipment, maintained in operational condition, that may be available for the purpose of utilisation in an emergency;
- b) liaise with the Control Agency about how the delivery of, or access to, any vehicles, plant and equipment will be achieved;
- c) have available at all times a list of persons on the Employee Emergency Response Support Register that are competent to operate the various items of plant and equipment; and
- d) reserve the right not to release Council plant and equipment for emergency response operations should extenuating circumstances exist (as deemed by the CEO).

3.3.4 *Scope of Works*

Council will advise the emergency services of the types of work that it is prepared to allow its plant to be used for from time to time. In general terms the scope will reflect that contained in the publication '*Supervision of Machinery Used in Bushfire Operations*' Government of South Australia, Edition 2, March 2011.

3.4 **Risk Management**

3.4.1 *Application of Risk Management*

The Council when supporting the emergency services in response operations will:

- a) apply appropriate risk management principles; and
- b) have regard to the arrangements of the LGA Asset Mutual Fund, the LGA Workers Compensation Scheme and LGS Mutual Liability Scheme.

The Council will act in a manner that ensures the various activities that might be undertaken in an emergency response situation are managed in such a way that the safety and health of its workers and community are paramount.

3.4.2 *i-Responda Framework*

The i-Responda framework has been developed in consultation with the LGA and Local Government Risk Services. It addresses issues such as incident management protocols, operational arrangements in emergency response situations and fulfils the legislative requirement of the *Work, Health and Safety Act 2012* to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of the Council worker.

Implementation of the framework will equip Council Chief Executives, managers and staff with information and tools that will enable a confident response to requests for Councils to provide support to emergencies.

Council will:

- a) implement the i-Responda framework, to ensure that all emergency response activities are undertaken within a consistent and robust risk assessment framework guiding practical decisions and actions pursuant to the Schemes' Rules; and
- b) establish, implement, monitor and review work health and safety policy and procedures consistent with the i-Responda framework.

3.5 Insurance

3.5.1 Local Government Association Asset Mutual Fund (LGAAMF)

The LGAAMF will continue to provide coverage to Council owned property, plant and machinery (mobile or otherwise) while it is being used in preventing, preparing, or responding to an emergency on the following basis:

- a) the plant, vehicle, or machinery must be operated by Council staff and in accordance with the i-Responda framework; and
- b) Council is responsible to ensure all property, vehicles, plant and machinery (mobile or otherwise) provided to support an emergency is fit for purpose and consistent with the emergency response.

3.5.2 Local Government Association Workers Compensation Scheme

Council's membership of the LGAWCS ensures that all staff are covered for workers compensation (as required by the *Worker's Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 1986*) where the activity being carried out with Council plant and equipment is ordinary Council business, so that activity forms part of the employee's ordinary employment.

Pursuant to workers compensation legislation, the compensability arises from injury sustained 'in the course of employment'. The i-Responda framework establishes that at all times in responding to an emergency incident or disaster, the Council, the CEO and the relevant employee/s will be undertaking ordinary activity 'in the course of employment' controlled and directed by council, including in an extraordinary event.

Council employees will retain workers compensation cover when supporting the emergency services by operating Council plant and equipment in the conduct of Council business.

- a) LGAMLS

For the purpose of the i-Responda framework, the Council as a member of the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme is entitled to civil liability cover including proactive risk management support, pursuant to the LGAMLS Rules.

The i-Responda framework establishes that all existing LGA LGRS insurance arrangements will continue (workers compensation, public liability and asset insurance) subject to the normal terms and conditions.

4. RESPONSIBILITY & REVIEW

4.1 Responsible Officer

Chief Executive Officer

Review to be undertaken by Director Infrastructure

4.2 Availability

This policy will be available on Council's website.

4.3 Review

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of a General Election for Local Government, or as required to meet other obligations.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 Legislation

Local Government Act 1999

5.2 Other References

Emergency Response Form - Registered Person
Emergency Response Resource Support Register
Emergency Services Plant and Equipment Register
i-Responda Framework