

# NSW State Emergency Management Committee

**Annual Report 2017-18**

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## Introduction

This report has been compiled in accordance with section 17 of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* to describe the work and activities of the State Emergency Management Committee during the financial year 2017-2018.

The report has been produced by the Office of Emergency Management, NSW Department of Justice.

## Foreword

### Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood Secretary, NSW Department of Justice

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is established by the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* (SERM Act). A key function of the SEMC is to facilitate strategic State-level emergency management capability through inter-agency coordination, cooperation and information sharing arrangements.

The State saw a number of significant fires in 2018 resulting in significant impacts to communities. On 18 March 2018, five separate fires swiftly burnt through 1,250 hectares of land destroying 65 homes and 70 caravans or cabins in the communities of Tathra, Reedy Swamp and Vimy Ridge. The multi-agency response of the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire & Rescue NSW and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service deployed a total of 71 resources. The combined efforts of those agencies, police and the community meant that no lives were lost and 810 houses were saved. The recovery operation for the Tathra fire has been a success with the innovative use of social media to enhance messaging to the local community.

In 2017-18 the SEMC endorsed its strategic exercise priorities for 2018 to 2022 and shaped its multi-agency state emergency management exercise program to reflect the strategic themes and priority hazards identified in the 2017 State Level Emergency Risk Assessment (SLERA). The SEMC agrees that exercises are critical to test preparedness and response plans.

The SEMC endorsed a number of key plans for the reporting period include the State Bush Fire Plan, State Flood Plan, State Storm Plan and the State Heatwave Plan. The SEMC also endorsed four functional area plans, the National Partnership Agreement Implementation Plan and delegated the ongoing regional planning for 2 significant locations. The SEMC remains committed in its work to provide safe and secure communities in NSW.

**Andrew Cappie-Wood**  
**Chair, State Emergency Management Committee**

## Role and Functions

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is established under the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* (SERM Act). In accordance with section 15 of that Act, the SEMC has the following functions:

- To advise the Minister on all matters relating to the prevention of, preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies (including the coordination of those activities of government and non-government agencies in connection with those matters).
- To review, monitor and advise the Minister on the adequacy of the provisions of this Act relating to emergency management.
- To provide strategic policy advice to the Minister in relation to emergency management.
- To review, monitor and develop emergency management policy and practice at a state level and to disseminate information in relation to any such policy and practice.
- To review the NSW State Emergency Management Plan and to recommend alterations to it.
- To endorse any sub plans or supporting plans established under the NSW State Emergency Management Plan.
- To facilitate strategic State level emergency management capability through interagency coordination, cooperation and information sharing arrangements.
- Such other functions as conferred or imposed on the Committee by or under the Act or as are related to this Act and assigned to the Committee from time to time by the Minister.

The Minister responsible for administering the SERM Act is the Hon Troy Grant MP, Minister for Emergency Services.

The SEMC membership consists of:

- a) The Chairperson of the Committee
- b) The State Emergency Operations Controller
- c) The State Emergency Recovery Controller, and
- d) Representatives of such relevant government and non-government agencies as the Minister may from time to time determine.

In addition to the Emergency Services, nine functional areas coordinate functional support for emergency operations in accordance with the SERM Act.

The Act also establishes Regional and Local Emergency Management Committees whose primary role is to prepare emergency management plans for their region or local area.

## Membership

### Chair

Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood

### Members as at 30 June 2018

State Emergency Operations Controller	Deputy Commissioner Jeff Loy
State Emergency Recovery Controller	Mr Feargus O'Connor
NSW Ambulance	Commissioner Dominic Morgan
Fire & Rescue NSW	Commissioner Paul Baxter
NSW Rural Fire Service	Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons
NSW State Emergency Service	Commissioner Mark Smethurst
NSW Volunteer Rescue Association	Commissioner Mark Gibson
Marine Rescue NSW	Commissioner Stacey Tannos
Agricultural and Animal Services Functional Area	Mr Barry Kay
Department of Premier & Cabinet	Ms Kristina Hickey
Energy & Utilities Services Functional Area	Mr Ronan Purcell
Engineering Services Functional Area	Mr Martin Dwyer
Environment Services Functional Area	Ms Sarah Gardner
Health Services Functional Area	Dr Gary Tall
Maritime Combat Agencies	Mr Shayne Wilde
NSW Treasury	Mr David Withey
Office of Local Government	Ms Sonya Hammond
Public Information Services Functional Area	Sergeant Kevin Daley
Telecommunications Services Functional Area	Ms Kate Foy
Transport Services Functional Area	Mr Greg Nott
Welfare Services Functional Area	Mr Matthew McFarlane

## Membership Changes

The following SEMC members were farewelled in 2017-18:

- Acting Deputy Commissioner Denis Clifford, State Emergency Operations Controller
- Ms Zoe de Saram, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Mr Douglas Revette, Energy and Utilities Services Functional Area
- Dr Ron Manning, Health Services Functional Area
- Ms Daniela Heubusch, Office of Local Government
- Ms Allison Rowlands, Welfare Services Functional Area

In 2017-18 the following new members welcomed to the SEMC:

- Deputy Commissioner Jeff Loy, State Emergency Operations Controller
- Ms Kristina Hickey, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Mr Ronan Purcell, Energy and Utilities Services Functional Area
- Dr Gary Tall, Health Services Functional Area
- Ms Sonya Hammond, Office of Local Government
- Mr Matthew McFarlane, Welfare Services Functional Area

## Executive Support

Secretariat support to the SEMC is provided by the Office of Emergency Management's Emergency Management and Policy Coordination Unit.

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## Section 1: Strategic Development

### SEMC Strategic Exercise Priorities for 2018-2022

The State Level Emergency Risk Assessment (SLERA) was completed in July 2017 to examine the 12 priority hazards in NSW and assign risk ratings to determine the importance of continued mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The SEMC created a sub-committee to strategically review exercise proposals of state and regional significance to the NSW Multi-Agency State Emergency Management Exercise Program. In 2017-18 the SEMC endorsed a five year strategy for the SEMC exercise program to address the SLERA hazards from 2018 to 2022.

### Emergency Risk Management (ERM) Framework

The ERM framework focuses on enhancing risk based decision making to inform the allocation of resources to proactively manage current and future emergency risks and strengthen emergency management capability and capacity. The NSW Government provided funding for data risk modelling, exercises and alignment of community engagements to address the priorities identified in the ERM framework. This included funding for regional emergency management funding to increase collaborative work with Local Emergency Management Committees and Regional Emergency Management officers.

### Emergency Vehicles Use of U-turn and Cross-over Facilities

In 2012 a fatal motor vehicle accident occurred on the F3/M1 highway involving a NSW RFS volunteer which resulted in criminal charges. The judgment in that case raised a number of issues related to the use of U-turn and cross-over facilities by emergency service vehicles.

An SEMC working group has sought a risk assessment of u-turn bays and cross over facilities to consider the appropriateness of existing signage and consider any changes that could improve safety for emergency vehicles and other road users.

### Commonwealth Disaster Funding Reforms

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has started working with local councils and stakeholder agencies to test and prepare for the Commonwealth Government's proposed disaster recovery funding reforms. As part of a pilot, the resource and implementation costs will be quantified during in preparation for statewide implementation.

### REMO and LEOCON Reviews

The NSW Police Force has progressed the Regional Emergency Management Officer review. Internal consultation with Regional Emergency Management Controllers has resulted in positive feedback and support for the review's recommendations. It is expected that most minor recommendations will be implemented in the near future.

### Sendai Framework Implementation

The Australian New Zealand Emergency Management Committee established an inter-jurisdictional Sendai Framework Working Group and commenced trial data collection

between October 2017 and February 2018. The SEMC continues to monitor the NSW contribution to the development of a national strategy for the implementation of the framework. NSW emergency services have participated in this trial by providing data to identify gaps against global target indicators.

### Critical Communications Enhancement Program

The Critical Communications Enhancement Program (CCEP) will consolidate the many separate radio networks owned and operated by NSW Government agencies into a single Government Radio Network (GRN). When fully implemented, the CCEP will increase the level of GRN coverage from 35% to over 80% of the state. This will significantly improve emergency and day-to-day operational communications for law enforcement, public safety and essential services.

## Section 2: Emergency Management Planning

### Review of the NSW State Sub and Supporting Plans

The SEMC endorsed a five-year review cycle for all sub and supporting plans. The change from a three to a five year cycle ensures time for exercises and operational use to aid the review process. It should be noted that this arrangement does not prevent the review or update of a plan in the interim if required and does not change the obligation to regularly exercise and test sub and supporting plans.

### State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 (SERM Act)

The review of the *State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989* (SERM Act) is complete incorporating considerable SEMC stakeholder feedback. Amendments to the SERM Act arising from the review were incorporated into the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

### NSW Pandemic Response and Human Influenza Pandemic Plan

The NSW Human Influenza Pandemic Plan was updated to align with the *Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza* (AHMPPI), amend governance arrangements and frameworks, streamline the description of agency capabilities and remove public information and business continuity available through existing online and other resources. The SEMC endorsed the NSW Human Influenza Pandemic Plan in June 2018.

### Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy

The Emergency Management & Disaster Resilience Review (EMDRR) includes Critical Infrastructure (CI) as a key pillar of work. The SEMC endorsed the establishment of the Critical Infrastructure Review Working Group (CIRWG) in March 2017. A key deliverable for the group is a NSW Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy (CIRS). CIRS is designed to address infrastructure resilience and will promote effective arrangements and coordination between infrastructure stakeholders, reduce response, recovery and reconstruction costs, improve adaptation to climate change and population growth and increase resilience within communities by reducing the social costs of disasters. The SEMC endorsed the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy in June 2018.

### Botany Bay Precinct Emergency Sub Plan and State Lucas Heights Emergency Sub Plan

A review has determined that the site specific hazards associated with both plans are best addressed through regional coordination. The plans are being progressed and will be submitted to the SEMC for endorsement in the future.

## NSW State Flood Plan

The State Flood Plan was reviewed and updated to incorporate a range of recommendations from various sources including the Coronial findings of the Hunter 2015 floods, recommendations from the interagency after action review and independent review reports for the northern rivers flooding.

The State Level Risk Assessment (2017) identified floods and the related phenomena of East Coast Lows as a priority risk. Maintaining and exercising the State Flood Plan is considered an important emergency risk management treatment to ensure that the arrangements remain current and relevant. The review was also an opportunity to distinguish the SES responsibilities at State level across all stages of an emergency, in particular strengthening the SES role in prevention and detailing phases of response. The SEMC endorsed the State Flood Plan in March 2018.

## NSW State Storm Plan

The State Storm Plan was reviewed and updated to incorporate changes consistent with the State Flood Plan review. In addition, the review clearly incorporated responsibilities for Coastal Erosion, in accordance with the Coastal Management Act 2016.

The State Level Risk Assessment (2017) identified storm as a priority risk. SEMC members and key stakeholders contributed to the Plan review which increased the Plan's clarity and ease of use, and supporting agency accountability across the areas of prevention, preparation, response and recovery. The SEMC endorsed the updated plan in June 2018.

## NSW State Bush Fire Plan

The State Bush Fire Plan details the arrangements for preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response to and recovery from bush fire events by the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS), and participating and support agencies. The Plan describes the arrangements for the control and co-ordination of the response to bush and grass fires, including those managed under the provision of Section 44 of the Rural Fires Act 1997, and the provisions for emergency warnings at all classes of fire.

The NSW RFS initiated the review of the State Bush Fire Plan to ensure arrangements remain contemporary. Internal feedback and external responses from Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Police Force were incorporated into the revised plan. The SEMC endorsed the plan in December 2017.

## State Heatwave Sub Plan

The State Heatwave Sub Plan provides for the coordination of information with other aspects of support to agencies being managed under the standard EMPLAN arrangements. The new sub plan accommodates the Bureau of Meteorology's new prediction service and heatwave intensity categories. The Plan also recognises the newly introduced category of 'severe', which refers to less frequent high intensity heatwaves which will impact vulnerable people. The new Sub Plan also provides for activation based on advice from NSW Health of unusual heat related health issues. The SEMC endorsed a new revision of the State Heatwave Sub Plan in March 2018.

## South West Metropolitan Emergency Management Plan

The South West Metropolitan Emergency Management Plan was developed over a period of six months through extensive consultation with Regional Emergency Management Committee members and related stakeholders. The plan outlines key features like evacuation centres, vulnerable facilities, transport hubs and critical infrastructure and incorporates local emergency plans, their review dates and LEMC responsibilities. The SEMC endorsed the updated plan in December 2017.

## Welfare Services Functional Area Supporting Plan

The State Welfare Services Functional Area Supporting Plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Welfare Services Functional Area. It includes the roles of participating and supporting organisations and arrangements for delivery at state, district/region and local levels. The revisions to the supporting plan include a list of disaster recovery stakeholders, greater alignment with Family and Community Service Memoranda of Understanding, reordering of the Plan contents to align with other supporting plan formats and refinement of content. The SEMC endorsed the updated plan in June 2018.

## Electricity Supply Emergency Plan

The Electricity Supply Emergency Plan provides the process for the emergency management of significant electricity supply disruptions in NSW by the Department of Planning and Environment, emergency services organisations and functional areas. The SEMC endorsed the plan in June 2018.

## Telecommunications Services Functional Area Supporting Plan

The Telecommunications Services Functional Area Supporting Plan (TELCOPLAN) sets out the NSW arrangements to coordinate telecommunications services support and resources required by the community, combat agencies and other essential services, in the event of an emergency. The SEMC endorsed the plan in January 2018.

## Section 3: Standing Committee, Working Group and Functional Area Reports

### NSW Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear & Hazardous Materials Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for the development, maintenance and review of the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) and Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) multi-agency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery capabilities within NSW.

The Steering Committee's key preparedness and prevention activities for 2017-18 include:

- Review of NSW Hazardous Material CBRN Sub Plans, Asbestos Sub Plan and Lucas Heights Sub Plan.
- Multi agency training activities in CBRN involving NSW Ambulance, NSW Police Force Rescue Bomb Disposal Unit (RBDU), NSW Police Force Forensic Services Group, Fire and Rescue NSW Hazmat, Special Operations Engineer Regiment (SOER), NSW Health and other functional areas. This coordinated multi agency exercises are increasing the capacity and capability of NSW emergency responders in preparation of a CBRN incident.
- Multi-jurisdictional cooperation between the Committee and the Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities to develop guidelines for communities affected by asbestos as a hazardous material following severe events such as storms of fires.

### Emergency Management Exercise Working Group

The Working Group was established to recommend strategic direction, review exercise proposals of state and regional significance, and to oversee the administration of exercise funding.

The Steering Committee's key preparedness and prevention activities for 2017-18 include:

- Streamlining the funding application process by simplifying the exercise proposal form and publishing a set of supporting resources.
- Creation of an exercise practitioner database of students who have previously completed the Design and Management Exercise course.
- Exercise Mass Casualty Part 2 – A state level exercise of response activities between state, regional, local and private sector participants with a focus on health aspects of a mass casualty event.
- Exercise Reunite – Bankstown. A state emergency management field exercise was conducted in April 2018 at Sydney Police Centre to explore Disaster Victim Registration and Register Find Reunite activation, their arrangements and relationship to agencies and processes.

- Exercise Maverick – Dubbo. A regional emergency management field exercise was conducted in March 2018 at Dubbo City Regional Airport to test a substantial multi-agency response to an on-airport incident.
- Exercise Warrumbungle Hightops – Coonabarabran. A regional multi-agency exercise was conducted in May 2018 at Warrumbungle National Park to improve key stakeholder interagency coordination and cooperation, and to identify any issues arising from remote and difficult terrain areas within the Central West EM Region.
- Exercise Outbreak - Dubbo – a regional emergency management discussion exercise was conducted on 2 December 2017 at the Orana Fire Control Centre to test the response and capability of agencies to a significant, protracted influenza pandemic emergency in the Central West region of NSW.
- Exercise Outbreak - Broken Hill – a regional emergency management discussion exercise was conducted on 1 August 2017 at the Broken Hill emergency operations centre to test and evaluate the response to a significant and protracted influenza pandemic in Far West NSW
- Exercise Ion - a state level multi-agency emergency management discussion exercise was conducted on 12 October 2017, to review and exercise the draft NSW Energy and Utility Services Functional Area Supporting Plan.

### State Mitigation Sub-Committee

The State Mitigation Sub-Committee provides advice, coordination and recommendations to the SEMC on matters relating to Emergency Risk Management, disaster mitigation and resilience, and funded programs. The SEMC endorsed the establishment of the Critical Infrastructure Review Working Group (CIRWG) in March 2017 to develop a NSW Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy.

In 2017-18 the Working Group conducted extensive consultation on critical infrastructure resilience by circulating a discussion paper and holding five stakeholder forums. The sub-committee received over 400 items of feedback for consideration which was considered in the development of the NSW Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy. The strategy and its implementation document were endorsed by SEMC in June 2018.

### State Emergency Management Training Advisory Group

The Training Advisory Group (TAG) provides advice and strategic guidance to the SEMC and its member agencies to ensure that multi-agency emergency management training is developed, delivered and evaluated by all agencies and aligns with NSW emergency management arrangements.

The TAG has become a member of the Joint Venture Initiative (JVI) alongside representatives from the Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW State Emergency Service and the NSW Rural Fire Service. The JVI represents a commitment from members to deliver, develop and design emergency management training. It identifies key areas of cooperation amongst the emergency service organisations. The pilot concept allows all agencies to benefit from the cooperation and collaboration in seeking out opportunities for multi-agency training and sharing of resources.

## NSW Urban Search and Rescue Advisory Committee

The NSW Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Advisory Committee is responsible for sharing information, advising the SEMC on strategic USAR capability issues, developing a multi-agency exercise program, and supporting Fire & Rescue NSW as the combat agency.

The Advisory Committee also ensures appropriate planning is achieved for NSW to successfully undertake United Nations certification as a heavy USAR team to deploy to international disasters.

The Advisory Committee's key preparedness and prevention activities for 2017-18 include:

- Multi-agency training on search techniques in structural collapse scenarios and threats to crowded places and mass casualty management.
- Development of multi-agency CBRN exercises to test response and recovery arrangements.
- Participation in a Commonwealth sponsored East Asian Summit forum to ensure effective planning for catastrophic events requiring interstate and international support.
- Review of the Structural Collapse Sub Plan to align it with amendments to supporting plans.

## Lessons Management Working Group

A Lessons Management Working Group was formed to lead the design and delivery of a Lesson Management System. The Working Group held its inaugural meeting in August of 2017 with the resolution to develop a Lessons Management Framework for the Emergency Management Sector that applies knowledge and lessons to strengthen capability.

In this year, the working group has

- Held a framework design workshop
- Prepared a draft Lessons Management Framework (LMF) for the NSW emergency management sector
- Developed a Lessons Management Process for SEMC
- Established Lessons Management Foundations eLearning

## Energy Emergency Summer 2017-18 Readiness Working Group

On 22 May 2017, the NSW Energy Security Taskforce published its Initial Report on the actions the NSW Government should take to ensure it is well prepared for the 2017/18 summer.

The Working Group consulted with broader stakeholders and addressed the relationship between energy supply, the broader emergency management space, and the heatwave and bushfire plans that have the potential for simultaneous occurrence.

## Evacuation Working Group

In 2017/18 the Working Group developed Mass Care Guidelines for locations within Metropolitan Sydney.

## Functional Area Reports

Functional Areas are units within NSW Government agencies that represent a category of services involved in emergency prevention, preparation, response and recovery.

Functional Areas engaged in a number of prevention and preparedness activities.

The Resilience and Recovery Functional Area:

- Partnered with the Department of Industry (DOI) to develop the Get Ready Business toolkit to raise awareness of disaster risk for business and to embed disaster preparedness into business planning.
- Hosted two 'Community Disaster Recovery' training programs to build NSW recovery capability amongst key stakeholders involved in recovery operations. Participants have included Local Councils, emergency services organisations, community service organisations and state government agencies.
- Commenced its Community Resilience Network Pilot to strengthen the relationship between the local emergency management committees and the community and business sectors.

The Health Services Functional Area:

- Updated its emergency management eLearning for mass casualty triage and white level inspection modules and commenced the development of a hazmat first receiver module.
- Updated its training for NSW Health Australian Medical Assistance Team members. The face to face interactive engagement activity was delivered to 60 NSW members.
- Updated its Major Incident Medical Services Plan which was endorsed by the State Health Emergency Management Committee.
- Developed its Health Emergency Management Education Framework which was endorsed by the State Health Emergency Management Committee and subsequently published as an Information Bulletin.

The Animal and Agricultural Services Functional Area:

- Launched online training for personnel who participate in the response to emergencies which impact animals and primary production.
- Conducted multi-agency incident management team courses in conjunction with Forestry Corporation, NSW National Parks and Wildlife and ACT Emergency Services Agency.

The functional areas also coordinated and participated in a range of exercises to test emergency management arrangements.

The Energy and Utilities Functional Area:

- Conducted a Multi-Agency Electricity Networks Exercise that used the State Emergency Operations Centre to simulate a restart from a system blackout and run consequence management.
- Conducted an exercise to test the arrangements of the recently endorsed Emergency Utility Services Function Area Plan.
- Conducted a desktop exercise of the Government Energy Action Response which provides protocols to reduce the government electricity demand when there is a threat of a shortfall in electricity in NSW.
- Facilitated a gas supply emergency desktop exercise to assess NSW preparedness for a gas emergency and test the refreshed Gas Supply Emergency Sub Plan. The exercise was an opportunity to further develop the relationships with network operators.

The Health Services Functional Area:

- Conducted a series of smaller exercises leading up to a large full scale mass casualty field exercise.

The Welfare Services Functional Area:

- Held a series of exercises in Gunnedah, Northern Sydney, South West Sydney, Cooma and Mulgoa to practice the operation of evacuation centres. These exercises were aimed at the various welfare stakeholders including Family and Community Services, Australian Red Cross, the Salvation Army Emergency Services, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Anglicare and the Disaster Recovery Chaplains Network, Department of Primary Industries, NSW Health, and NSW Police Regional Emergency Management Officers.

The Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area:

- Conducted an exercise to test cross border arrangements for a response to a biosecurity emergency impacting both NSW and Queensland. The exercise tested joint jurisdictional local control centres, systems and legislation, and involved 260 participants representing state and Commonwealth jurisdictions

## Annexure 1 - Meetings Held and Attendance

### Meetings 2016-2017

- Meeting 102 – 14 September 2017
- Meeting 103 – 5 December 2017
- Meeting 104 – 1 March 2018
- Meeting 105 – 7 June 2018

Role/Organisation	Member Attendance	Delegated or other representation by member organisation
Chair	3	1
State Emergency Operations Controller	3	-
State Emergency Recovery Controller (or Acting)	4	-
Deputy State Emergency Operations Controller	3	-
NSW Ambulance	3	1
Fire & Rescue NSW	2	2
NSW Rural Fire Service	4	-
NSW State Emergency Service	3	1
NSW Volunteer Rescue Association	3	-
Marine Rescue NSW	2	1
Agricultural and Animal Services Functional Area	1	2
Department of Premier & Cabinet	3	1
Energy & Utilities Services Functional Area	2	1
Engineering Services Functional Area	4	-
Environment Services Functional Area	4	-
Health Services Functional Area	2	1
Maritime Combat Agencies	3	-
NSW Treasury	-	3
Office of Local Government	2	-
Public Information Services Functional Area	3	-
Telecommunications Services Functional Area	3	-
Transport Services Functional Area	3	-
Welfare Services Functional Area	3	1