



Australian Government

National Emergency Management Agency

Criticality of crisis communications

Maintaining public trust before, during and after times of disaster

EMPA Australia conference





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Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation NEMA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and the community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Our operating environment

A time of complex, cascading and concurrent events:

- **900mm** of rain in 24-hours following TC Jasper in Q'ld
- **620,000** business and homes with no power in Victoria
- **2000km** detours for supply routes in Western Australia
- **\$1 billion** in 2018-19 to **\$6.5 billion** in 2022-23
- **87 per cent** dedicated to recovery
- **7 per cent** dedicated to resilience and risk reduction
- **\$4 billion** over the past 5 years on AGDRP
- Supporting our **overseas partners** during crisis events
- **16** COMDISPLAN activations and **29** Requests for Assistance (RFAs)



44

Disasters since
October 2023



195

Australian Local
Government
Areas impacted



\$6.5

Billion on Cth
administered
disaster funding
for 2022-23

Second National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction

Risk



National Risk Profile



Higher-Risk Weather Season Summit 2024



Implementing reviews and connecting stakeholders

Capability



National Emergency Management Stockpile

Our priorities



Aerial Firefighting Capabilities

Mitigation Investment + Risk Reduction



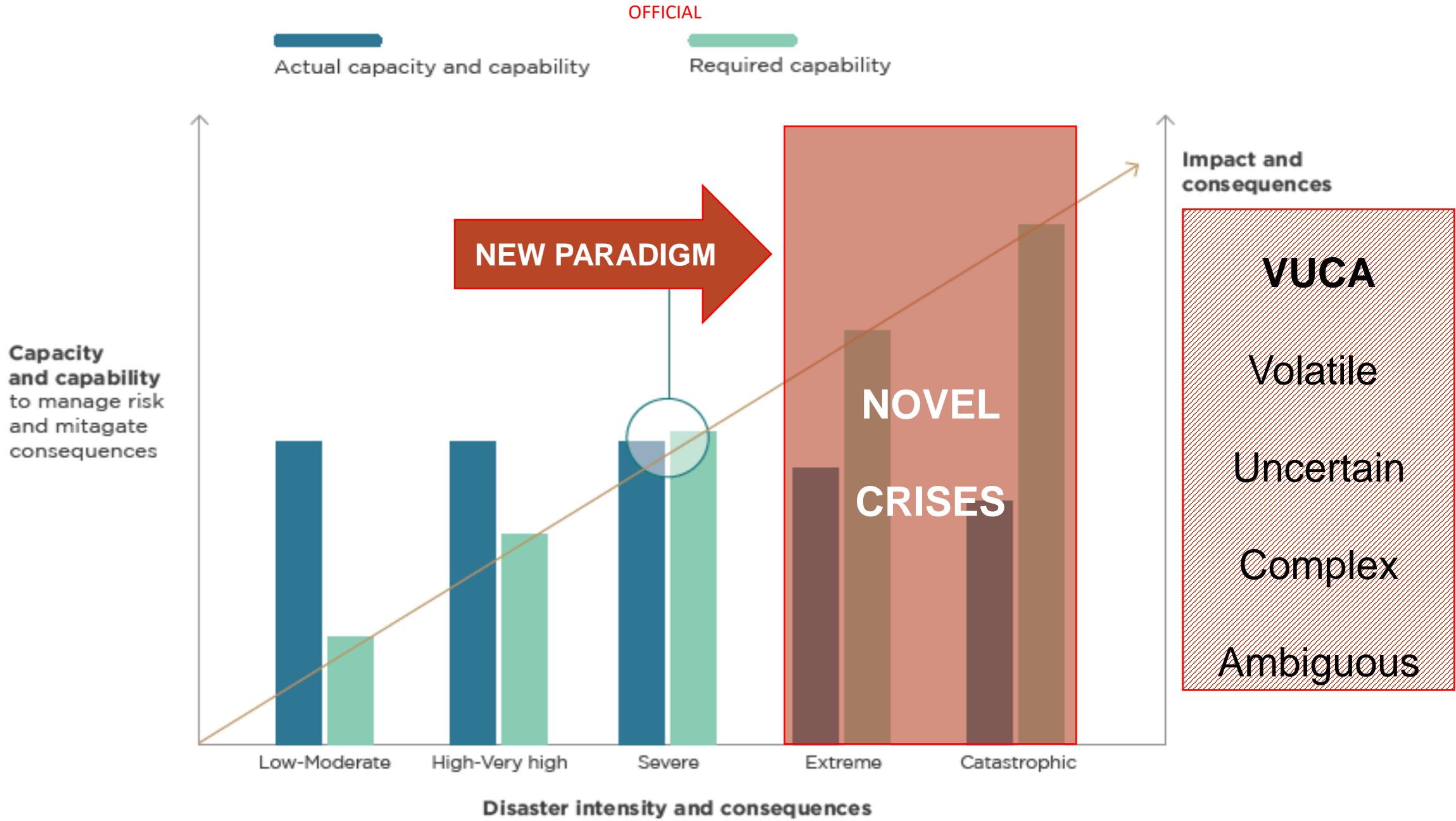
Administering the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements



Delivering the Disaster Ready Fund



Hazards Insurance Partnership





Routine emergencies

Designed in mastery

Detailed plans

Reasonable expectations - rapid, repeatable,
reliable

Clear policies and procedures

Resources are at right level and specialised

Training and exercising to that creates
familiarity

High situational awareness and sense making

Hierarchical governance (C2 C3)



Novel/VUCA/Catastrophic crises

Large scale

Speed of onset, impact and consequences
High stakes (life, liberty, injury, property,
livelihood)

No absolute plan/high-levels of uncertainty
High emotions/fear

Resources overwhelmed/unable to fully prepare

Multi stakeholders/multi-jurisdictional

Whole-of-society consequences

Complex governance/interdependencies

Complex

Centralised coordination/decentralised
execution

Good practice principles for arrangements to manage catastrophic crises

- 1 Arrangements must allow for a **nationwide approach**
- 2 Arrangements must allow for a **collaborative and coordinated approach**
- 3 Arrangements must allow for **decentralised decision-making** and **distributed execution** supported by **centralised strategic coordination**
- 4 Arrangements must allow for **flexibility, improvisation** and **scalability**
- 5 Arrangements must allow for the **integration** of **civilian** and **emergent capability**
- 6 Arrangements must promote and **embrace foresight** and **sense making**
- 7 Arrangements must **foster interoperability**
- 8 Arrangements must be supported by **planning processes**
- 9 Arrangements must be **responsive** and **support** elected officials **decision making** and **crisis leadership**

Problem solving method

1

Near real-time situational awareness

2

Meaning and sense-making

3

Undertake anticipatory analysis/strategic foresight

4

Define the problem that requires stabilisation

5

Define goals/objectives and values @ risk (moral reasoning)

6

Develop options/lines of effort

7

Describe desired end state

8

Choose most appropriate option

9

Synchronise lines of effort = Unity of effort

10

Deliberate and execution (task & coordinate)

11

Assess/evaluate

12

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate! (vertically and horizontally)

Collaborating

The National Coordination Mechanism facilitates a voluntary collaborative forum to coordinate in a VUCA crisis



Coordinating

Whole-of-nation' effort and cooperation is necessary to make Australia more resilient to natural disasters. This calls for action, not only by governments and individuals, but also by industry, businesses, charities, volunteers, the media, community groups and others."

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements



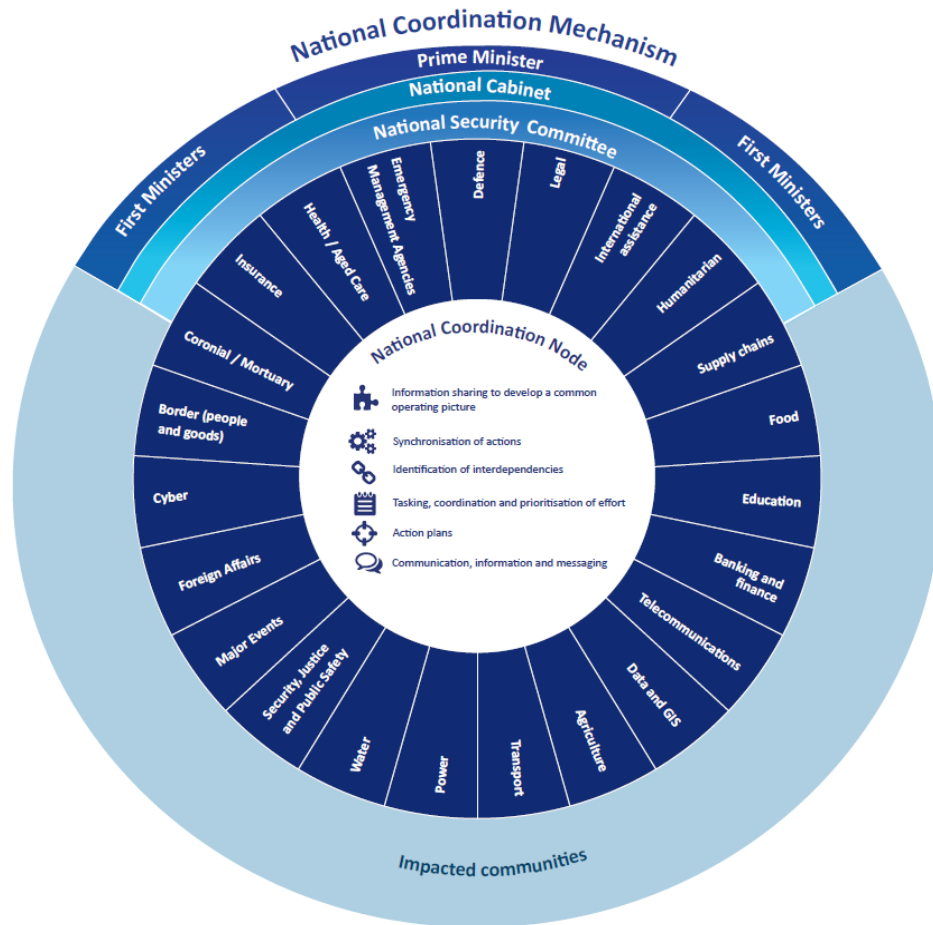
Communicating

The most critical component of maintaining public trust, choosing our words, bringing all the right voices to the table before during and immediately after a crisis **communicate, communicate, communicate!**



National Coordination Mechanism

The National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) is the centre of the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework as a whole-of-government all-hazards resource.



- Facilitates **shared situational awareness, rapid problem definition and defines lines of effort and ownership of solutions** to stabilise issues of concern.
- Provides **flexible, scalable and vector-agnostic** support and the ability to manage a range of hazards and second and third order consequences.
- Is **not a decision-making mechanism** and exerts no command and control – engagement with the NCM is entirely voluntary.
- Is not a committee. Organisations are **invited because of their expertise, experience or potential role in identifying and implementing** stabilising actions.
- **Works closely** with Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments, industry and non-government organisations.
- Is a tool **available to all states and territories** to support consequence management activities.
- Has effectively **supported consequence management** at any stage of the national disaster management continuum including preparedness, response and recovery.

Common themes and learnings

- 1 Space weather event and exercise 2024
- 2 After Action Review (AAR) TC Jasper 2024
- 3 Exotic Animal Disease Taskforce 2023
- 4 Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020
- 5 Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry 2016
- 6 Royal Commission Black Saturday 2009
- 7 Arrangements must **foster interoperability**
- 8 Arrangements must be supported by **planning processes**

Choose our words in messaging and warnings!

1

Do not make assumptions about the recipients of a warning

2

Write warning messages for non-English speaking or low-literature audiences

3

Responding to a warning is an iterative process

4

Recipients may receive messages while under time pressure or stress, people's capacity to process information

5

Warnings should be timely and use the best information available at the time. If your best information is unlikely to match recipients' personal observations or other confirmation sources

6

Warnings should be as consistent or complementary as possible consistency of structure and language is key

7

There are different ways to encourage action and there are many ways to write a message to encourage the recipient to comply with the action requested

8

Warnings and messaging must be synchronised

9

Transparency: What we know, what we do not, what we are doing, what we want the community to do, next advise or message (**battle rhythm**)

10

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate! (vertically and horizontally)

11

Strategic communication plans with pre-populated templates for use during Novel events that can be **disseminated at speed**



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Questions?