

**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES**

**FUNCTIONAL AREA SUPPORTING**

**PLAN**



**A FUNCTIONAL AREA SUPPORTING PLAN OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES  
STATE DISASTER PLAN (Displan)**

## **AUTHORISATION**

The New South Wales State Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan has been prepared as a Supporting Plan to the New South Wales State Disaster Plan (Displan), to coordinate media resources, to provide for the controlled release of public safety and/or warning messages and public information, and to coordinate the interaction between all agencies during emergency operations.

This Supporting Plan is authorised in accordance with the provisions of the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act, 1989 (as amended).

Recommended

.....

Public Information Functional Area Coordinator

Endorsed

.....

Chairman  
State Emergency Management Committee

## **AMENDMENT LIST**

1. Proposals for amendment or addition to the contents of the Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan are to be forwarded to:

The Public Information Functional Area Coordinator  
C/O NSW Police Media Unit  
Level 14, 201 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney, 2001

2. Amendments promulgated are to be entered in the under-mentioned table when entered.

<b>Amendment</b>		<b>Entered</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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## **Definitions**

**Note:** These definitions should be read in conjunction with those contained in the New South Wales Disaster Plan (Displan)

### **Agency**

Means a government agency or a non-government agency.[source: SERM Act]

### **Agency-specific Information**

For the purposes of this plan, Agency-specific Information relates to factual information about an agency's own area of operational activity and includes:

- numbers of personnel deployed (staff/volunteers)
- time attended scene
- specialist equipment or other resources deployed
- agency-specific tasks and activities
- skills and training of staff
- background information on the agency

### **Combat Agency**

Means the agency identified in Displan as the agency primarily responsible for controlling the response to a particular emergency.[source SERM Act]

### **Command**

In this plan means the direction of members and resources of an agency / organisation in the performance of the agency / organisation's roles and tasks. Authority to command is established by legislation or by agreement with the agency / organisation. Command relates to agencies / organisations only, and operates vertically within the agency / organisation.[source: Displan]

### **Consequence Management**

Incorporates the arrangements for dealing with the consequences of a disaster or an emergency. The purpose of consequence management is to protect public health and safety, restore essential government services and provide emergency relief to those affected.

### **Control**

Means the overall direction of the activities, agencies or individuals concerned [source: SERM Act]. Control operates horizontally across all agencies / organisations, functions and individuals. Situations are controlled.

### **Coordination**

Means the bringing together of agencies and individuals to ensure effective emergency or rescue management, but does not include the control of agencies, organisations and individuals by direction.[source: SERM Act]

### **Crisis Management**

Crisis management refers to the deployment and coordination of specialist resources for the prevention and/ or the resolution of HIGH-risk situations. Crisis arrangements do not involve consequence management.

### **Displan**

Means the New South Wales State Disaster Plan. The object of Displan is to ensure the coordinated response to emergencies by all agencies having responsibilities and functions in emergencies. [source: SERM Act]

### **District**

The State is divided into such districts as the Minister may determine by order published in the Gazette. Any such order may describe the boundaries of a district by reference to Local Government Areas, maps or otherwise.[source: SERM Act]

### **District Emergency Operations Controller (DEOCON)**

Means the Region Commander of Police appointed by the Commissioner of Police, as the District Emergency Operations Controller for the Emergency Management District. [source: Displan]

### **Emergency**

Means an emergency due to an actual or imminent occurrence (such as fire, flood, storm, earthquake, explosion, terrorist act, accident, epidemic or warlike action) which:

- (a) endangers, or threatens to endanger, the safety or health of persons or animals in the State; or
- (b) destroys or damages or threatens to destroy or damage any, property in the State; being an emergency, which requires a significant and coordinated response.

For the purposes of the definition of *emergency*, property in the State includes any part of the environment of the State. Accordingly, a reference in the Act to:

- (a) threats or danger to property includes a reference to threats or danger to the environment, and
- (b) the protection of property includes a reference to the protection of the environment. [source: SERM Act].

### **Functional Area**

Means a category of services involved in preparations for an emergency, including the following:

- a. agriculture and animal services
- b. communication services
- c. engineering services
- d. energy and utilities
- e. environmental services
- f. health services
- g. public information services
- h. transport services
- i. disaster recovery human services (welfare services).

### **Functional Area Coordinator**

In this plan means the nominated coordinator of the Public Information Services Functional Area, who is tasked to coordinate the provision of Functional Area support and resources for emergency response and recovery operations, who, by agreement of Participating and Supporting Organisations within the Functional Area, has the authority to commit the resources of those organisations.

### **Incident**

In this plan means a localised event, either accidental or deliberate, which may result in death or injury, or damage to property, which requires a normal response from an agency, or agencies.

### **Joint Media Information Centre (JMIC)**

Assembling area for media where joint media briefings are held and spokespersons from responding agencies are collated.

### **Media Liaison Officer**

Provide communication links between the Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) or the Public Information Centre operated by the Public Information Manager (PIM) and their operational clients. Broadly speaking, they have two main functions:

- a. To disseminate information from the relevant Public Information Centre to spokespersons, key decision makers and operational commanders. This includes keeping them apprised of all released materials, media coverage and public information strategies;
- b. To gather information for the relevant Public Information Centre from their area of posting, including directions and requests from spokespersons, key decision makers and operational commanders;
- c. To coordinate media briefings and conferences within the JMIC.

### **Participating Organisation**

In this plan means core agencies that are likely to assume the role of PIM or be represented in the PICC and provide support to the public information operation.

### **Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC)**

The Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) will, once activated, coordinate the release of public information on behalf of all agencies. The Public Information Functional Area Coordinator (PIFAC) is responsible for the management of the PICC and will request additional public information resources from other agencies in order to adequately staff the PICC.

### **Public Information Manager (PIM)**

Whenever an agency responds to an incident, there is a PIM. In this plan, the PIM refers to the representative of the agency primarily responsible for the public information operation during that particular incident or emergency. The PIM is either:



1. the representative of the agency primarily responsible for controlling the response to a particular incident or emergency as defined by statute or DISPLAN; or
2. PIFAC where PIFAC is responsible for the coordination of public information.

### **Public Information Officers**

Media, marketing, public relations, technical and administrative officers from relevant agencies who form part of a specialist public information team. The activities of these officers are coordinated by PIFAC (within the PICC) or otherwise by the PIM.

### **Recovery**

A Recovery Centre provides a multiplicity of services in one location. This removes the necessity for victims to seek services at several venues and eliminates the duplication of services provided to individuals and families. It also aids in the coordination of human services.

### **Response**

In relation to an emergency includes the process of combating an emergency and of providing immediate relief for persons affected by an emergency. [source: SERM Act]

### **State Emergency Operations Controller (SEOCN)**

Means the person appointed by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister, responsible in the event of an emergency, which affects more than one Emergency Management District, for controlling the allocation of resources in response to the emergency. The State Emergency Operations Controller is to establish and control a State Emergency Operations Centre. [source: SERM Act]

### **Supporting Organisation**

In this plan means the Government Departments, statutory authorities, volunteer organisations and other agencies that have indicated a willingness to participate and provide specialist support resources to a combat agency's Controller of Functional Area Coordinator during major emergency operations.[source: Displan].

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>DEOCON</b>	District Emergency Operations Controller
<b>DPIC</b>	District Public Information Centre
<b>FMC</b>	Forward Media Centre
<b>FMO</b>	Forward Media Officer
<b>JMIC</b>	Joint Media Information Centre
<b>PICC</b>	Public Information Coordination Centre
<b>PIFAC</b>	Public Information Services Functional Area Coordinator
<b>PIFASP</b>	<b>Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan</b>
<b>PIM</b>	Public Information Manager
<b>PMU</b>	Police Media Unit
<b>POC</b>	Police Operations Centre
<b>SEOC</b>	State Emergency Operations Centre
<b>SEOCON</b>	State Emergency Operations Controller
<b>SEWS</b>	Standard Emergency Warning Signal

## PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

- 101 The Public Information Services Functional Area Supporting Plan (PIFASP) is a Supporting Plan of the New South Wales State Disaster Plan (Displan), developed pursuant to the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act, 1989 (as amended), and should be read in conjunction with that Plan. The Plan sets out the arrangements for the Public Information Services Functional Area Coordinator (PIFAC) to coordinate public information messages on behalf of all agencies during a non-terrorism related emergency, controlled by SEOCON.
- 102 The Plan has been developed to reflect the changing needs of public information and the way in which emergency management organisations broadcast important information to the community in a timely and coordinated manner.
- 103 All agencies responding to an emergency are entitled to release information without the express approval of the PIFAC. However, it is the responsibility of all responding agencies to ensure that the information they intend to release is not in conflict with messages being generated by the PIFAC. This may require responding agencies to consult with PIFAC prior to releasing such messages.
- 104 Agency-specific information is factual information about an agency's own area of operational activity and includes:
- a. Numbers of personnel deployed (staff/volunteers)
  - b. Time attended scene
  - c. Specialist equipment or other resources deployed
  - d. Skills and training of staff
  - e. Background information on the agency.

### AIM

- 105 The aim of this plan is to detail the arrangements for the coordination of the collection, collation and dissemination of public information in a non-terrorist related emergency controlled by SEOCON.

### SCOPE

- 106 This plan applies to the coordination and release of public information during an actual or imminent emergency for the following:
- a. Emergency Operations controlled by Emergency Operations Controllers (EOCONs);
  - b. When SEOCON has approved a request from the Combat Agency for the PIFAC to assist with Public Information; or
  - c. When SEOCON has approved a request from a Combat Agency for PIFAC to coordinate Public Information.

- 107 This plan applies to all forms of public information: local, state, national and international media, including radio, television, public speaking, the Internet, telecommunications messaging systems and any other medium that can be used to transmit information to a wide audience.
- 108 The response to an emergency by a Combat Agency will be in accordance with their own arrangements. However, guidance on the responsibilities and operation of Agency public information systems is provided at Annex B.
- 109 The management and release of public information in the event of a threatened or actual terrorist attack is detailed in the *NSW Counter-Terrorism Public Information Arrangements*.

## **PRINCIPLES**

- 110 This plan follows the principles below, which will enable the effective management, coordination and release of information to the public:
- a. Ensuring the integrity of emergency operations
  - b. Building and holding public confidence
  - c. Meeting media and public demands for timely information
  - d. Providing information which impacts on public safety in a timely manner
  - e. Providing consistent and coordinated information from all arms of government
  - f. Providing accurate and reliable information
  - g. Assisting in longer-term recovery.

## **CONCEPT**

113. The Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) maintains “monitor” status at all times and when activated coordinates the release of public information on behalf of all agencies when directed by the SEOCON.
114. When the PICC is activated, PIFAC will request Public Information Officers from participating and supporting agencies in order to adequately staff the PICC.
115. Public Information Officers assigned to the PICC or acting as Media Liaison Officers (MLOs) will function as a public information team, not as representatives of their individual agencies.
116. The setting-up of the public information line is the responsibility of the State Emergency Operations Centre. However, ensuring a coordinated approach to the publicising of hotline numbers and the provision of accurate scripted messages is the responsibility of the PIFAC.

## **PART 2 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

201. The operational structure, roles and responsibilities of the Public Information Services Functional Area are set out below:

### **Responding Agencies**

202. All agencies responding to an emergency are entitled to release information without the approval of the PIFAC. However, it is the responsibility of all responding agencies to ensure that agency specific messages they intend to release are not in conflict with messages being generated by the PIFAC. This may require responding agencies to consult the PIFAC prior to releasing such messages.
203. Participating and supporting organisations are to be prepared to provide Public Information Officers to staff the Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) or to act as Media Liaison Officers.
204. Public Information Officers assigned to the PICC or acting as Media Liaison Officers (MLOs) to the PICC will function as a public information team, not as representatives of their individual agencies.
205. All organisations involved in an operation are responsible for providing the PICC with timely and accurate information so that it can be effectively released to the public.
206. The Public Information Services Functional Area Coordinator (PIFAC) is responsible to SEOCON for the operation of the Public Information System during an imminent or actual emergency operation, which is the responsibility of SEOCON.

### **The Public Information System**

207. The Public Information System will normally consist of the following:
- a. Public Information Functional Area Coordinator (PIFAC)
  - b. Deputy PIFAC
  - c. Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC)
  - d. Field Coordinator
  - e. Media Liaison Officers
  - f. Joint Media Information Centre
  - g. Media Spokespersons
  - h. Administrative Support

### **Deputy PIFAC (DPIFAC)**

208. PIFAC will nominate at least one Deputy PIFAC to enable public information operations to function for a 24-hour period for an extended period.

209. The Deputy PIFAC may be appointed from any agency and will assume the role and responsibilities of PIFAC whilst carrying out that function.
210. Either PIFAC or Deputy PIFAC can appoint an Executive Officer as needed to assist them in their function or carry out assigned tasks.

### **The Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC)**

211. The Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) will, if activated and stood-up, coordinate the release of public information.
212. Whilst the Public Information Services Functional Area Coordinator (PIFAC) is responsible for the overall management of the PICC, the PICC Coordinator is responsible for the ongoing operations within the PICC, including: coordinating the collection, collation and dissemination of information from all agencies.
213. The role and function of the PICC is to:
  - a. provide a single source of public information
  - b. support and assist in the operational management of an emergency and subsequent investigations
  - c. provide information in a timely manner which promotes public safety
  - d. provide accurate, reliable and authorised information
  - e. build and hold public confidence
  - f. provide consistent and coordinated information messages
  - g. assist longer-term recovery.

### The Structure and Location

214. The size, structure and location of the PICC will be determined by operational requirements. Whilst it is preferable to have a single PICC housing all Public Information Officers, this may not always be possible – particularly during the early stages of an operation. A satellite PICC may need to be established. In these circumstances the “virtual PICC” continues to operate as one, even though some PICC staff will be located in different locations.
215. The PICC will usually consist of the following elements:
  - a. The PICC Coordinator
  - b. Field Coordinator
  - c. PICC media liaison officers
  - d. Administration support

The PICC Coordinator

- a. The coordination of members from individual agencies within the PICC is essential. The PICC Coordinator is responsible for the ongoing operations within the PICC including and may task MLO's to assist with:
- b. Coordinating the collection, collation and dissemination of information from all agencies
- c. Providing guidance, direction and taskings to the MLO's within the PICC
- d. Ensuring regular briefings amongst PICC members. At a minimum morning and afternoon briefing sessions should be held to plan information releases for the next 24 hour period and discuss emerging issues
- e. To review and edit all PICC materials and ensure authorisation by PIFAC prior to release
- f. To ensure PIFAC, SEOCON, Operational Commanders, Agency and Functional Area Coordination Centres are aware of all PICC messages
- g. Ensuring all PICC materials approved for release are provided to the Field Coordinator;
- h. Ensuring adequate shift hand-over briefings
- i. Coordinating the establishment of media and public information lines in conjunction with the SEOC. This includes ensuring scripted messages provided to telephone operators or recorded messages are consistent and authorised by the PICC and the relevant functional area(s)
- j. Gathering information from 1800 'hotline' operators about caller concerns, misinformation etc, assessing this material and notifying the PIFAC of any identified trends
- k. Devising a strategy for special needs populations such as culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the elderly or incapacitated
- l. Coordinating the posting of information on the EmergencyNSW website
- m. Preparing and broadcasting official public announcements and directions by:
  - i. Broadcast interruptions (radio and television)
  - ii. Use of the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)
  - iii. Public address systems or volunteer "door knocks"
  - iv. Print – newsletters, fliers and pamphlet distribution
  - v. Use of SMS or phone-up message systems
  - vi. Internet, banners

216. Public messages must be authorised by PIFAC after consultation with the relevant Operational Commander and the PICC Coordinator.

PICC MLO's

217. To enable the effective management of large volumes of complex and detailed information, MLO's will be tasked to perform a number of functions. MLOs provide information to the PICC Co-ordinator and PIFAC. MLOs tasks will include.
- a. The collection, collation, and dissemination of information of the type assigned to them
  - b. Preparing media releases and public information material. Ensuring PICC materials are approved by the PICC Coordinator prior to release
  - c. Ensuring all PICC materials approved for release are provided to the Field Coordinator via the PICC Coordinator

- d. Monitoring the release of information to, or the broadcast of information by, the media
- e. Analysing media coverage and identifying problem areas and future trends. Providing this information to the PICC coordinator and PIFAC
- f. In order for interaction amongst agencies and to enable all members to contribute to the PICC's objectives
- g. Regular briefings (at a rate to be determined by the PICC Coordinator) will be held amongst MLO's
- h. A formal handover must occur at between PICC co-ordinator and MLO's during shift change over.

### Public Information Media Liaison Officers

218. In the event that emergency service organisations, functional areas and participating and supporting organisations are required to provide PIOs to support the operations of the PICC, they are to:
  - a. Collect information, assess its reliability and prepare appropriate media releases/ public information materials on behalf of all agencies. This includes preparing material on behalf of their own agency or any other agency, as directed by the PICC Coordinator;
  - b. Respond to media inquiries as directed by the PICC Coordinator;
  - c. Act as a liaison officer for their own agency.
219. Whilst the composition of the PICC will primarily be government agencies, the involvement of relevant private sector organisations may be appropriate.
220. Each Participating and Supporting Organisation should update contact details and confirm nominees every three months. Contact details are to be forwarded to the Director/Commander, Public Affairs, NSW Police.

### The Field Coordinator

221. The Field Coordinator, located within the PICC, is responsible for coordinating the activities and communication links between the PICC and its MLOs. The responsibilities of the Field Coordinator include:
  - a. to ensure the effective deployment and tasking of MLOs.
  - b. to ensure that all MLOs are kept appraised and informed of: materials produced by the PICC, strategic planning, future trends and potential problem areas;
  - c. to ensure MLO support for key decision makers and operational commanders is adequate;
  - d. to ensure clear lines of communication between the PICC and MLOs;
  - e. to assist MLOs prepare suitable briefings and speaking notes for spokespersons;
  - f. to develop a field strategy and establish reporting procedures for MLOs.

### **Media Liaison Officers (MLOs)**



222. The PICC Coordinator or the Field Coordinator will coordinate the deployment of MLOs, once the PICC is activated.
223. MLOs act as the eyes, ears and spokespersons for the PICC. They provide critical communication links between the PICC and its operational clients. They have two main functions:
- a. To disseminate information from the PICC to spokespersons, key decision makers and operational commanders. This includes keeping them apprised of all PICC materials, media coverage and public information strategies.
  - b. To gather information for the PICC from their area of posting, including directions and requests from spokespersons, key decision makers and operational commanders.
224. MLOs represent the PICC and the entire public information operation, rather than a single agency. Therefore a Public Information Officer from any agency can be deployed to undertake one of the following roles:

Forward Media Liaison Officer (FMLO)

225. FMLOs are typically deployed to the area of operations to support the Site Controller, Forward Commanders and Functional Area Coordinators.
226. FMLOs provide support by
- a. Establishing a Joint Media Information Centre (JMIC) and providing the primary point of contact for on-site media
  - b. Arranging appropriate conferences within the JMIC and coordinating media access to the site under the direction of the Site Controller
  - c. Ensure the Site Controller, Emergency Service Commanders, Functional Areas and any other key spokesperson are kept apprised of all PICC information releases
  - d. In conjunction with the Field Coordinator, prepare suitable briefings and speaking notes for spokespersons
  - e. Advise key spokespersons of trends and issues in media coverage, strategies to be deployed and future directions
227. Should there be a requirement to deploy more than one FMLO then a Lead FMLO (LFMLO) will be nominated to coordinate forward public information operations. Other FMLOs may be tasked by the LFMLO or assigned to coordinate a particular public information topic or on behalf of a particular agency.

State Emergency Operations Centre MLOs (SEOC MLOs)

228. MLOs will be deployed to the SEOC.
229. The number of MLOs deployed to the SEOC will depend on the requirements of commanders and the public information operation.

230. The role of the MLOs deployed to support the SEOC include:
- a. To ensure that all functional areas within the SEOC are kept apprised of all PICC information releases
  - b. To ensure the SEOCON is kept apprised of all PICC information releases
  - c. In conjunction with the Field Coordinator, prepare suitable briefings and speaking notes for spokespersons
  - d. Advise Emergency Services, Functional Area representatives and SEOCON of trends and issues in media coverage, strategies to be deployed and future directions
  - e. Collect information from functional areas and directions from SEOCON and convey them to the PICC in a timely manner
231. MLOs at the SEOC will have at least one administration officer to support them.

### **The Joint Media Information Centre**

232. The JMIC is an area for media where regular press conferences and briefings are held. Ideally, the JMIC should be housed near to the area of operations. Depending upon the nature of the operation, another JMIC may need to be established.
233. When in operation the JMIC is to:
- a. Provide media representatives with timely, consistent and easy-to-understand information about the response, initial recovery and mitigation operations
  - b. Provide on-site spokespersons from responding agencies
  - c. Forward media inquiries to the FMLO in the Forward Command Post/Operations Centre; and
  - d. Provide media representatives with times and locations of media conferences
234. Coordinating the media at the JMIC is the responsibility of the Lead FMLO (LFMLO).
235. All information provided to the media at the JMIC must be approved by the PICC Coordinator.

### **Media Spokespersons**

236. Providing a constant media face is a key strategy to ensuring public confidence. Ideally the chosen spokesperson should be someone who appears both knowledgeable and authoritative. For example, a high-ranking member of a responding agency or other public official who can constantly engage in media conferences.

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- 237. The lead media spokesperson will be determined in consultation with PIFAC. Other senior operational commanders and representatives, however, will still be required to participate in regular media conferences.
- 238. Should there be operational reasons why a Commander cannot constantly engage with the media then that Commander is to appoint a Deputy spokesperson to undertake this role of their behalf. For example, the Site Controller may appoint a deputy spokesperson for the purposes of media conferences within the forward JMIC.

**Administrative Support**

- 239. Providing adequate administrative support to the PICC and its external arms is critical to the public information operation. PICC SOPs are to be developed to meet this requirement.

**District PIFAC (DISPIFAC)**

- 240. Should the public information operation so require, the PIFAC may appoint a District level PIFAC.
- 241. DEMCs have been requested to identify suitably trained personnel from the emergency services and functional areas, who may be able to fill this role.

## **PART 3 -ACTIVATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **ACTIVATION**

301. The arrangements in this plan are always active and apply:
  - a. For an emergency operation controlled by Emergency Operations Controllers (EOCONs)
  - b. When SEOCON has approved a request from the Combat Agency for the PIFAC to assist with Public Information; or
  - c. When SEOCON has approved a request from the Combat Agency for PIFAC to coordinate Public Information

### **NORMAL STAGE**

302. PIFAC will monitor situations, which may develop into emergencies requiring Public Information support, and advise Participating and Supporting Organisations if their services are likely to be required.

### **OPERATIONAL STAGE**

303. PIFAC:
  - a. directs the PICC Coordinator to activate the PICC and staff to an appropriate level
  - b. develops a strategic media plan and assists the PICC Coordinator in identifying priorities for the next 24-hour period
  - c. nominates a DPIFAC and identifies a SCC MLO (if appropriate)
  - d. advises Participating and Supporting Organisations of the estimated length of the public information operation
  - e. ensures appropriate communication links between the Field Coordinator and external MLOs
  - f. ensures that SEOCON/ relevant Operational Commanders are kept fully informed of progress and developments relating to the media during the course of the operation
  - g. advises media organisations of the situation and seeks their ongoing cooperation.
  - h. maintains direct and continuous communication links with
    - i. PICC/SEOC as appropriate
    - ii. FMLO/JMIC and
    - iii. Agency Operations Centres and Functional Area Coordination Centres

### **STAND DOWN STAGE**

304. PIFAC:
  - a. Consults SEOCON regarding the need for the ongoing coordination of public information

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- b. In consultation with SEOCON, identifies the agency responsible for ongoing public information releases and consults with that agency regarding their ongoing responsibilities
- c. informs the Participating and Supporting Organisations of the Stand Down declaration, and of any ongoing requirements for the coordination of Media resources during initial recovery operations
- d. determines the degree of ongoing mobilisation of the PICC, and details for debrief of all PICC staff, including all MLOs
- e. arranges a debrief of all PICC staff, including all MLOs
- f. makes arrangements for a formal *debrief* of all organisations involved in providing public information services
- g. following the *debrief*, prepares a post operation report, highlighting lessons learnt, and amendments needed to policy and/or plans
- h. performs additional tasks assigned, including executive debriefing requirements.
- i. Returns to Normal stage.

## **PART 4 - CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **CONTROL**

401. PIFAC is responsible for the coordination of Public Information Operations as described in this plan.
402. The location and contact detail of the PICC will be advised separately by PIFAC.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **Community Relations Commission (CRC)**

403. The Community Relations Commission has the capability to assist with the dissemination of Public Information to those areas, which have concentrations of people whose first language is not English. Face to face interpreter services, voice mail messages in languages other than English, an email assistance service, rapid translation services, contact numbers for ethnic media outlets, and links and contacts for community leaders and peak ethnic community organisations are available through the CRC.
404. The CRC has a prepared Community Relations Crisis Management Plan (Complan) to maintain and manage community harmony within NSW in response to local and international events, which impact adversely on community relationships. In the event that responding agencies report that a community crisis may be possible, PIFAC is to obtain details and pass them on to the CRC.

#### **Internal Communications**

405. Communications links between the PICC and PIFAC, Site control, all Operations Centres, and Functional Area Coordination Centres are fundamental to successful Public Information Operations.
406. Identifying a system of communications between these groups will include the use of:
  - a. Telecommunications; landline, mobile, email, fax, satellite phones
  - b. Radio communications
  - c. Couriers or messengers.

#### **External Communications**

407. The methods used for disseminating information to the public during an emergency will largely depend on the scale and nature of the emergency and the infrastructure and resources government agencies have at their disposal.
408. Whilst the broadcast of public information via media groups is the primary information conduit, it is preferable that a range of multi-media tools is used to

inundate the community with messages of reassurance. Strategies must be flexible enough to cater for a range of circumstances and may include:

- a. Broadcasting requests for the public not to use their cellular phones
  - b. Using the Internet as a tool to broadcast to both media and the general public
  - c. Broadcast interruptions (radio and television)
  - d. Use of the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)
  - e. Mobile and static loudspeakers
  - f. Print – newspapers and pamphlet distribution
  - g. Use of SMS or phone-up message systems
  - h. Use of volunteers and community “doorknocks”
  - i. Use of Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) to identify vulnerable communities such as the sick and elderly.
409. Consideration must also be given to identifying which demographic groups are most likely to receive broadcasts from different information sources. For example, the elderly may not regularly use the Internet and therefore broadcasts via this mechanism may not reach them.

## **PART 5 - ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

501. Administration and logistics are normally contained in the Standing Operating Procedures for Control / Coordination Centres.

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEWING, TESTING, EVALUATING AND MAINTAINING THIS PLAN**

502. This Plan is to be reviewed after every activation as part of the PICC debrief process outcome, and / or at least every five years.
503. Updating and improvements to media training of District Emergency Operations Controllers is to be made as necessary after each review of the Plan



## **PARTICIPATING AND SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS**

### **Participating Organisation**

Public Information Officers from the following agencies may be required in the PICC:

- NSW Police
- NSW Ambulance Service
- NSW Fire Brigades
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW State Emergency Service
- Agriculture and Animal Services
- Communications Services
- Disaster Recovery Human Services (Welfare)
- Engineering Services
- Energy and Utilities Services
- Environmental Services
- NSW Health
- Transport Services
- Attorney Generals Department (Coroners Office)
- Department of Local Government
- Premiers Department
- Community Relations Commission

### **Supporting Organisations**

- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Defence Force
- Australian Broadcasting Authority
- Department of Ageing, Disability and Homecare
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- Department of Housing
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
- Department of State and Regional Development
- Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation
- Emergency Management Australia
- Minister for Emergency Services
- NSW Maritime
- Sydney Airports Corporation Limited
- Telstra
- Attorney General's Department
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Government Attorney General's Department

Participating and supporting organisations are requested to provide contact details of their nominees to the Commander, Police Public Affairs and to confirm the details every three months.

## **A guide for Agencies for Managing of Public Information**

1. Combat Agencies are responsible for the coordination of public information for emergency operations for which they are so designated.
2. This responsibility includes meeting the public information requirements of both participating and supporting agencies.
3. All agencies are entitled to release agency specific information without approval from the combat agency (or PIFAC).
4. Agency specific information is factual information about an agency's own area of operational activity. It includes:
  - a. Numbers of personnel deployed (staff/volunteers)
  - b. Time attended scene
  - c. Specialist equipment or other resources deployed
  - d. Skills and training of staff
  - e. Background information on the agency.
5. Participating and Supporting organisations are responsible to ensure that agency specific information does not conflict with information released by the Combat Agency (or PIFAC).
6. Combat agencies are expected to have a Public Information Manager (PIM) who will be responsible for the coordination of information for emergency operations. The responsibilities of the PIM will include coordinating the Public Information requirements of Participating and Supporting Agencies
7. It is the responsibility of participating and supporting organisations to provide the PIM of the Combat Agency (or PIFAC) with timely and accurate information particularly information concerning the safety of the community.
8. The PIM is a representative of the agency primarily responsible for the public information operation during an emergency.
9. The PIM is responsible for:
  - a. Establishing additional resources from other agencies in order to adequately staff such centres
  - b. Managing the public information centre and its external elements
  - c. Ensuring an effective level of public information is provided during all phases of the operation
  - d. Ensuring public information support to the key operations centres and decision makers
  - e. Advising the Controller on public information strategies and public information needs
  - f. Seeking the ongoing cooperation of the media
  - g. Coordinating information release of behalf of all arms of government; and

- h. Highlighting the joint agency response to the operation.
10. The Public Information Centre should be able to carry out the following tasks:
- a. Establishing a Joint Media Information Centre (JMIC); where regular press conferences and briefings are held. This includes coordinating spokespersons from other agencies, if required
  - b. Ensuring the effective dissemination of warnings and announcements to members of the public, via Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS), broadcast interruptions, public address systems or “door knocks”, printed material, SMS or phone-up systems
  - c. Establishing a centre or the means to coordinate the collection, collation and dissemination of information from all agencies
  - d. Supporting and assisting the operational management of an incident on behalf of all responding agencies
  - e. Coordinating the activities of public information officers from all responding agencies and ensure they are provided with adequate guidance, direction and briefings
  - f. Coordinating the establishment of media and public information lines on behalf of all agencies and any subsequent scripted telephone messages
  - g. Devising a strategy for affected or special needs communities including displaced persons, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the elderly or the impaired
  - h. Coordinating the release of all agency information on the official government website. [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)
  - i. Arranging for the activation of the Public Information Hotline when required

### **Typical Public Information Requests**

11. Public information requirements will typically include the following:
- a. Giving an estimation of financial loss or impact
  - b. Identifying premises of people
  - c. Estimating numbers of deceased persons or the cause of death
  - d. Estimating total numbers of injured
  - e. Speculation on causes
  - f. Comments that attribute culpability or blame
  - g. Information that criticises or may result in criticism of other agencies
  - h. Information which may compromise a Police operation or investigation
  - i. Personal feelings or judgments
  - j. Matters beyond the operational scope of the agency
  - k. Promotion or advertisement of a specific product
  - l. Personal views or beliefs
  - m. Commenting on another agencies’ area of responsibility without the express approval of that agency.

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