



# **Regional Emergency Management Planning Guideline**

**September 2016**

Version 1.1

**Title:** Guideline for the development of Regional Emergency Management Plans  
**Purpose:** This document has been prepared as a guide to assist Regional Emergency Management Committees in developing Regional Emergency Management Plans.  
**Prepared by:** SEMC Working Group – Regional Emergency Management Planning  
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A version of this document for general use and distribution is available on the  
Emergency NSW website at [www.emergency.nsw.gov.au](http://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au)

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Aim**

This Guideline is prepared under the auspices of the State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN). The Guideline aims to support Regional Emergency Management Committees (REMCs) to develop Regional Emergency Management Plans. This Guideline does not replace planning arrangements for specific hazards such as floods and bush fires which are contained within sub plans and agency specific policies.

### **1.2 Scope**

The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring the community is well prepared and that the emergency services, functional areas and other participating agencies can provide effective emergency management support for events in NSW and interstate

## **2. PLANNING ROLE OF REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES**

A key to minimising the cost and effects of emergencies, after all reasonable risk reduction measures have been taken, is effective emergency planning. The emergency planning process is designed to produce a set of arrangements that will provide the basis for managing emergency impacts ([AEM Series Number 43 - Emergency Planning](#)).

REMCs are responsible for the preparation and review of plans in relation to the prevention of, preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies in the Emergency Management Region for which it is constituted (Section 23 *SERM Act 1989*). This includes the comprehensive consultation, review and endorsement of Local Emergency Management Plans developed by LEMCs.

The *SERM Act 1989* requires the NSW Police Force to provide 'executive support' to the REMC and Regional Emergency Operations Controller (REOCON). This role is known as the Regional Emergency Management Officer (REMO). Within this planning process, the REMO is responsible for facilitating and collating the Regional EMPLAN for endorsement.

## **3. DEVELOPING A REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **3.1 Planning Overview**

The [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience](#) recognises that emergency management is a shared responsibility for the whole community. Regional emergency management planning needs to incorporate the key role that community plays in contributing to its own safety and to develop and strengthen the partnership between emergency management agencies and the community.

Decision making in emergency situations often occurs in a high pressure environment and it is important to have well documented arrangements to ensure a coordinated management approach.

Regional EMPLANs:

- clearly define roles and responsibilities of responders and community partners;
- demonstrate a level of preparedness by the REMC;
- inform disaster management response and recovery at local, regional and state levels;
- detail regional control arrangements;
- detail how support will be co-ordinated to a combat agency, functional areas and affected communities;
- provide a flexible set of arrangements that can be used as a cross reference by REMC;  
and
- ensure compliance with the *SERM Act 1989*.

Regional EMPLANs will usually be developed during regular REMC meetings. State Functional Areas are not all represented on the REMC. The State Functional Area Coordinators should be informed of the intention to hold a Regional emergency plan meeting and of the specific hazards that will be discussed if relevant to their area of services. Planning for different hazards may occur over a number of REMC meetings.

Where Functional Areas cannot provide a representative at the REMC, the REMO may seek advice prior to the meeting to identify potential issues and agree on responsibilities and actions in relation to the regional plan. State Functional Area representatives will also have the opportunity to comment on and approve the Regional plan at the State Emergency Management Committee.

Other stakeholders that can contribute an understanding of regional resources, vulnerabilities and networks, such as local council representatives in community and environmental services should also be considered in the regional emergency management planning process.

### **3.2 Engaging the Community**

Community Engagement in the emergency management context, is the 'process of stakeholders working together to build resilience through collaborative action, shared capacity building and the development of strong relationships built on mutual trust and respect.'

Community engagement involves:

- identifying existing community strengths, capacity and capabilities;
- sharing information in a way that is relevant and targeted to the demographic needs of the community;
- providing opportunities to promote individual and community disaster preparedness;  
and
- including the community in the planning and decision making process.

As part of the Regional planning process REMCs should consider regional resources and seek advice from regional and local agencies and community groups:

- What resources can be immediately provided locally to support emergency operations within the community?
- What resources are not available within the region and may require state level assistance?

Further guidance regarding Community Engagement options and methods can be found in the [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework](#) (AEM Series Handbook 6).

## **4. ENDORSEMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE**

### **4.1 Approval and Endorsement**

Regional EMPLAN must be disseminated by the REMO and considered by all members of the committee prior to approval at the relevant REMC meeting. The REOCON (REMC Chair) and appropriate Combat Agency representative (where applicable) will act as co-signatories on behalf of the committee.

Once approval has been received from the REMC, the REMO is to forward signed plans to the SEMC Secretariat (NSW Office of Emergency Management [OEM]). The OEM will arrange for signed plans to be disseminated to members of the SEMC for review and comment. In particular, this allows for Functional Areas not usually represented on REMCs to verify proposed arrangements.

Feedback/comments will be collated by the OEM and discussed with the REMO. Where necessary, the REMC will be asked to revise any arrangements/identified issues prior to resubmission.

Once confirmed, final plans will be circulated to SEMC members for consideration and endorsement at the next SEMC meeting. Once approved, the OEM will return approved plans to the REMC.

This process is depicted in *Section 5*.

### **4.2 Quality Assurance**

A Regional EMPLAN must be reviewed and submitted to the SEMC at least every three (3) years to ensure that the plan complies with this guideline. The REMC must ensure they implement similar processes for Local EMPLANS that require their ongoing review and endorsement.

This process is intended to encourage high quality plans that are consistent with this Guideline and whether there are opportunities to improve the proposed arrangements.

The OEM will maintain a register of plans which will be submitted to the SEMC annually to ensure they remain contemporary and compliant.

### **4.3 Dissemination**

The REMO will ensure appropriate distribution of plans to REMC members and other key stakeholders. Parts 1 to 4 of the template may be made publicly available however Part 5 is restricted. This is further explained in *Section 6 – Regional Emergency Management Plan Template*. Public facing versions of Regional EMPLANS will be made available on the [NSW](#)

[Emergency website](#) and restricted versions should be made available to authorised REMC members via the Emergency Management Operations System (EMOS).

#### **4.4 Exercising**

A Regional EMPLAN must be exercised annually to ensure it complies with this guideline, unless an actual operation with a subsequent After Action Review has been conducted. This includes the activation and operation of an identified Emergency Operations Centre.

The REMO will maintain a register of exercises conducted which will be submitted to the SEMC annually to ensure arrangements are well versed.

## 5. OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESSES

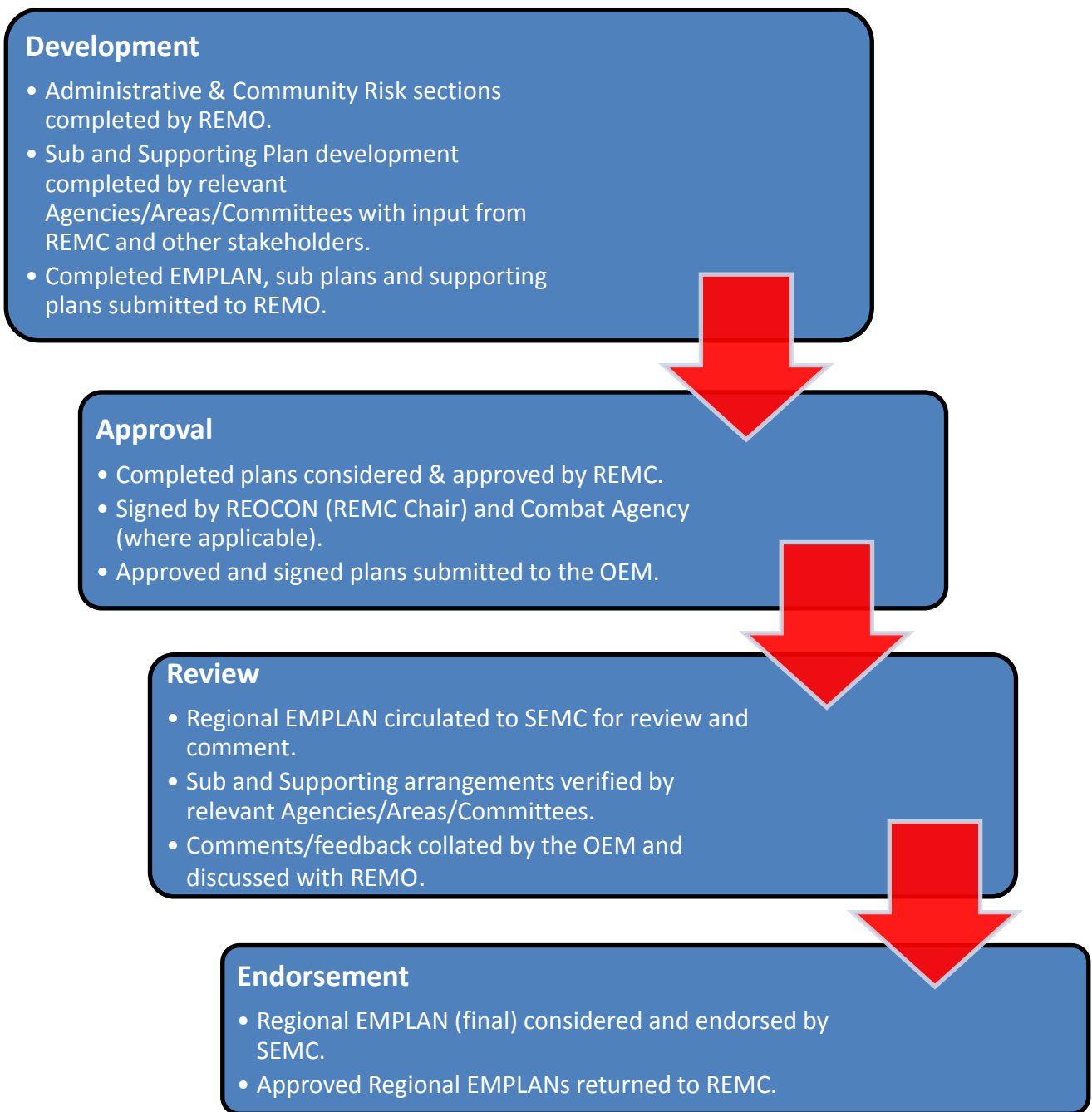


Figure 1 - Overview of Regional Emergency Management Planning Processes



## **6. REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE**

The Regional EMPLAN template provides a document framework for planning that can be used by REMC members and Emergency Operations Centre personnel to inform decision making across the Emergency Management phases: Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

The plan is broken down into five sections:

- Part 1 – Administration.
- Part 2 – Context and Risk Assessment.
- Part 3 – Local Emergency Management Plans.
- Part 4 – Sub Plans and Supporting Plans.
- Part 5 – Restricted Operational Information.

### **6.1 Part 1 - Administration**

The Administration section addresses traditional elements of an emergency management plan. This section is easily completed through identified formatting.

The Regional Emergency Management Officer (REMO) has responsibility for completing this section.

Key elements that vary to the Local EMPLAN template include (1) Activation, Escalation and Demobilisation, (2) Control, Command and Coordination (CCC) and (3) Test and Evaluation.

1. *Activation, Escalation and Demobilisation* - this component is intended to provide guidance regarding the triggers that may result in the activation of the Regional EMPLAN, escalation to a State level and, demobilisation of the Regional EMPLAN. The REMC may identify specific Regional triggers beyond those listed.

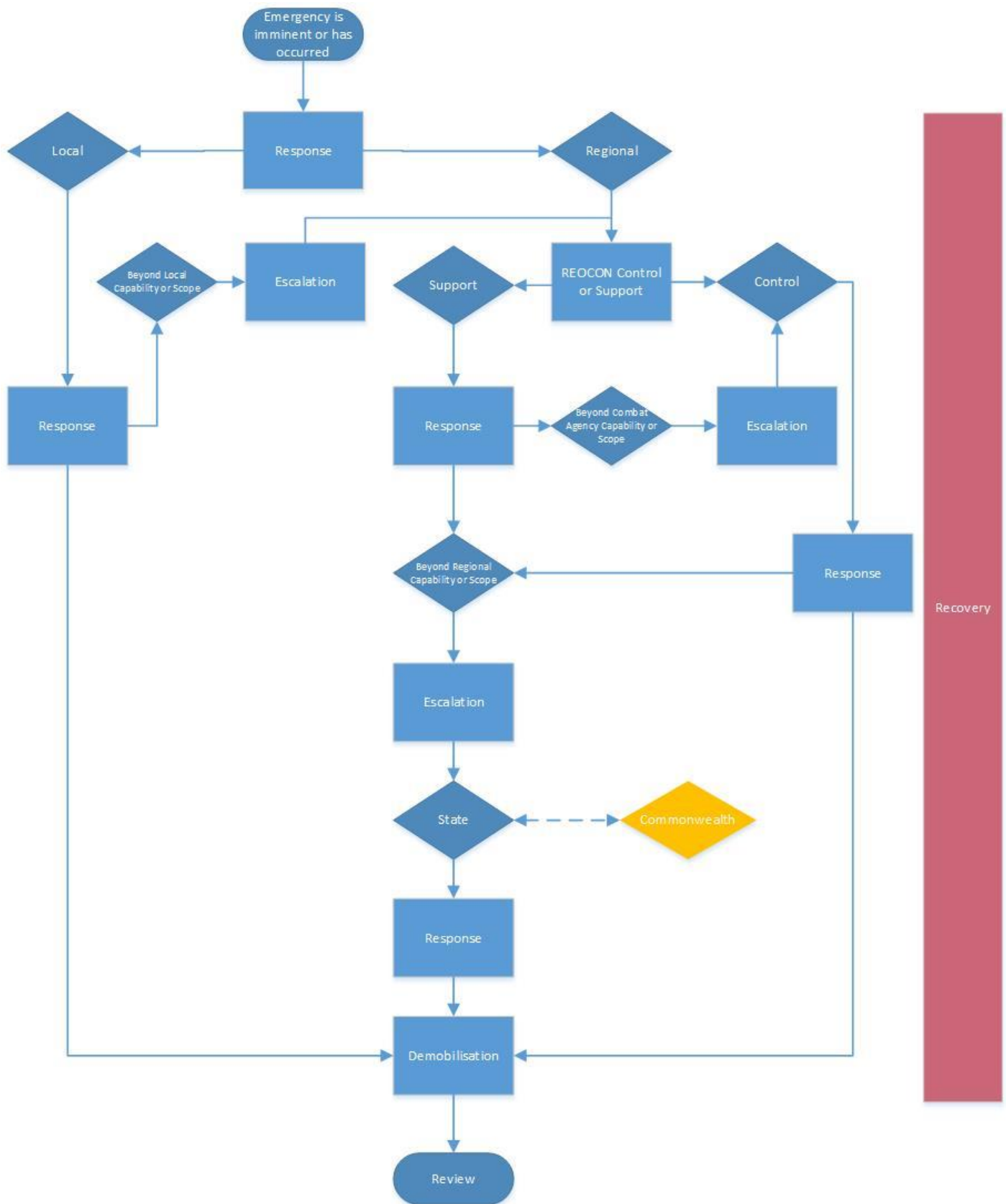


Figure 2 - Activation, Escalation and Demobilisation

2. *Control, Command and Coordination (CCC)* - this is intended to provide an overview of the standard CCC structures that can be utilised depending on the role that a Regional level response undertakes. The specific CCC structure may vary according to the type of emergency and should be confirmed on each occasion between stakeholders with the standard arrangements considered.

Note: A solid line indicates a direct link, dotted line represents an information link.

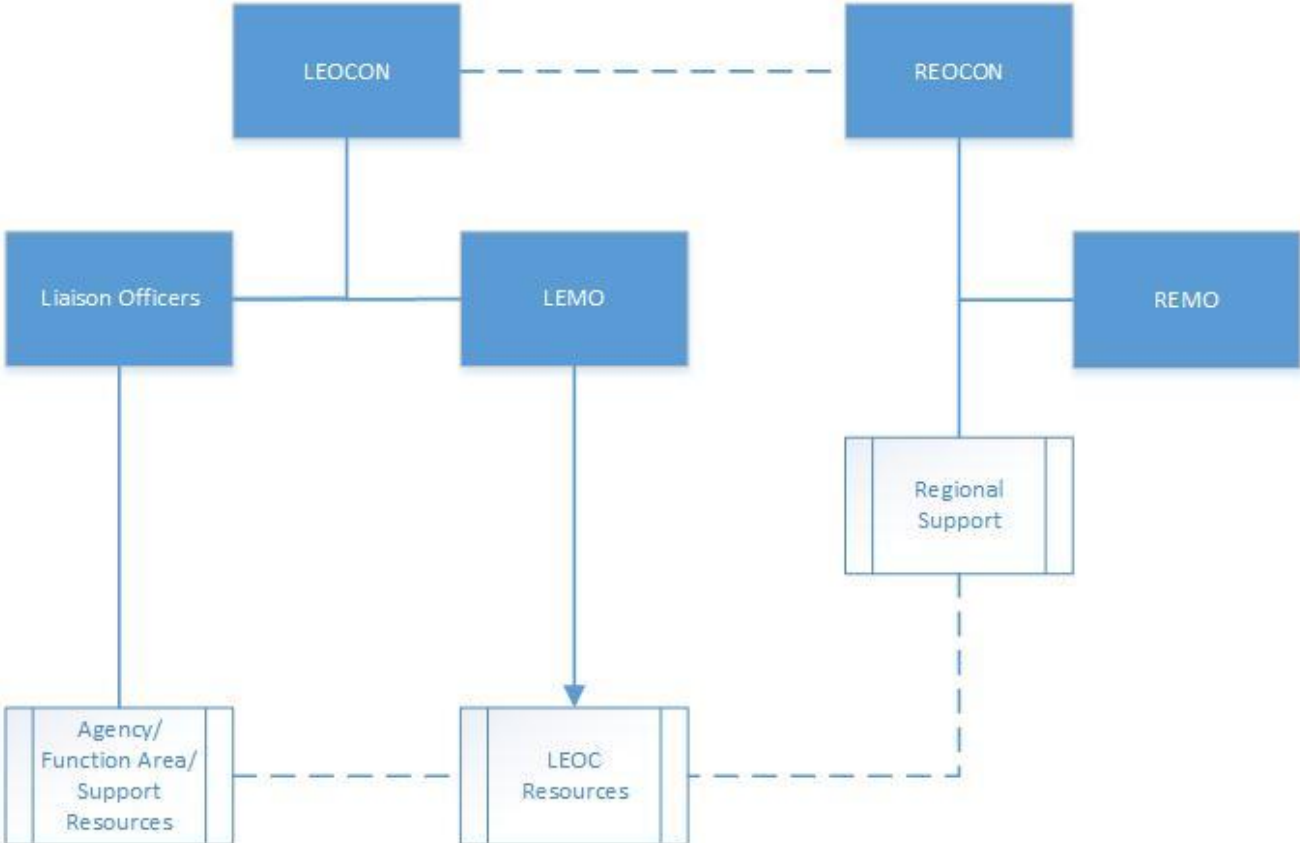


Figure 3 - Region acting as a support mechanism to a Local emergency

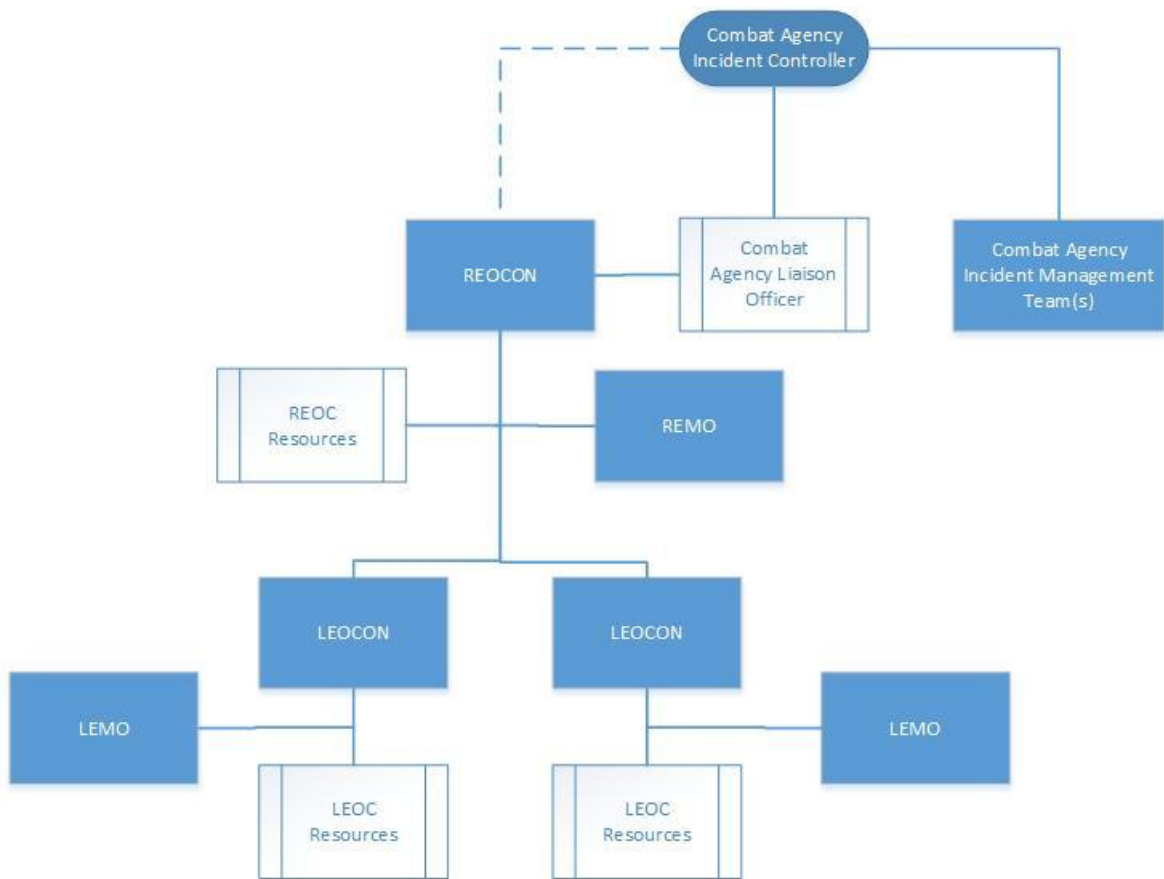


Figure 4 - Region supporting a Combat Agency for a Regional emergency

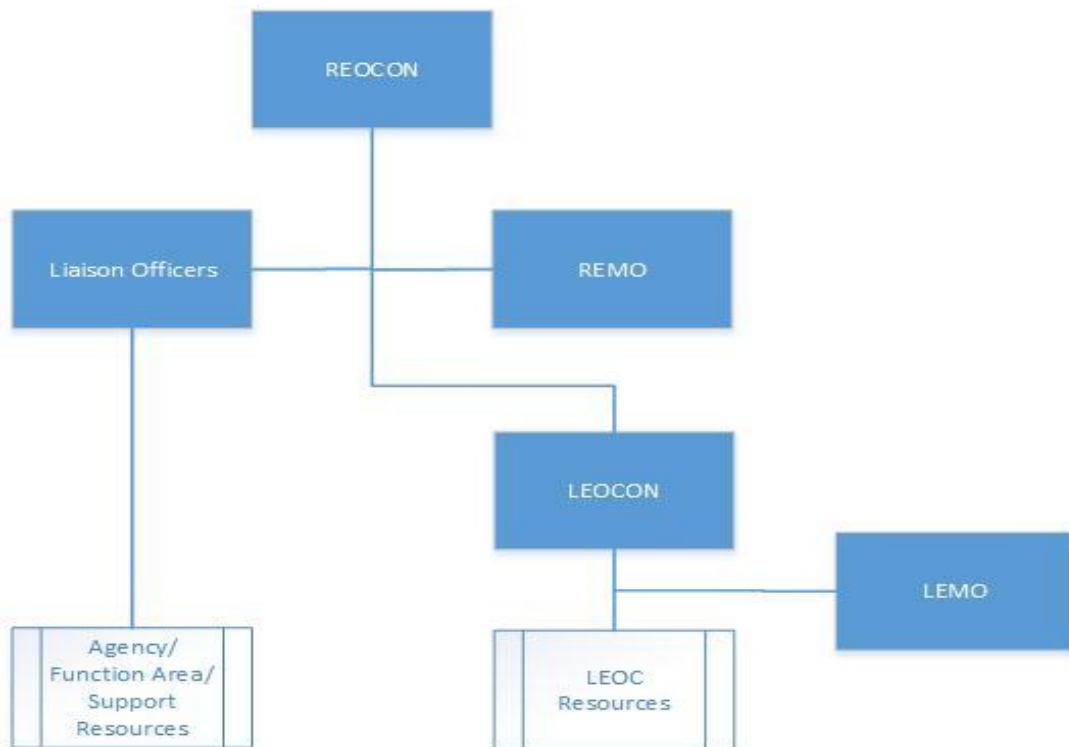


Figure 5 - Region controlling a Regional emergency

3. *Test and Review Process* – includes additional triggers for review and provides an overview of the EMPLAN continuous improvement cycle.

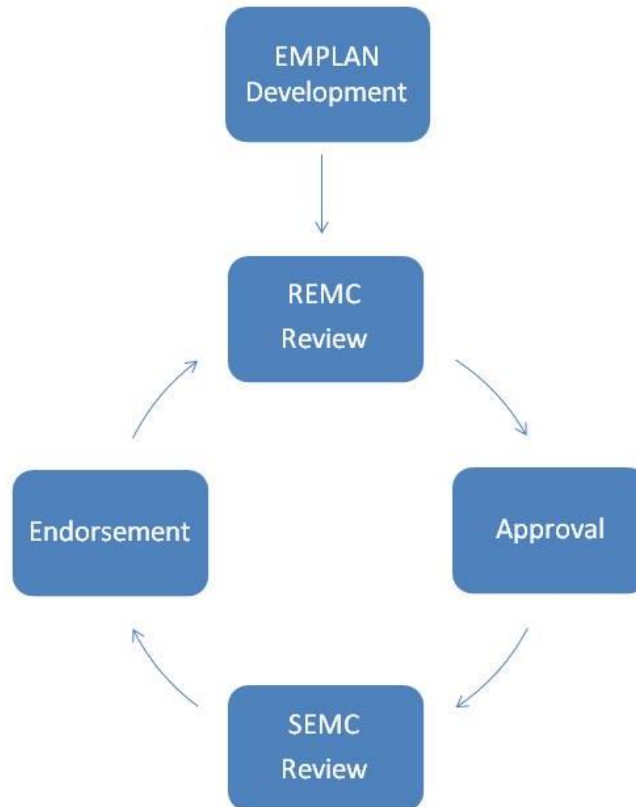


Figure 6 - EMPLAN Continuous Improvement Cycle

## 6.2 Part 2 – Context and Risk Assessment

The regional profile assists the REMC to understand the diverse needs, values and priorities of the region and its characteristics within the broader environment. This information is critical to inform planning and emergency operations and it is critical that this part of the plan is completed by the committee as a collective.

Emergency Risk Management is based on Australian/New Zealand Standard *AS/NZ ISO 31000:2009 – Risk Management – Principles & Guidelines*. This standard provides the basis for the emergency risk management process detailed in the [National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines](#).

Regional Emergency Management Committees utilise Emergency Risk Management studies as the basis for planning and the creation of emergency management arrangements at the regional level with consideration of existing Local EMPLANS. Further guidance can be obtained from the NSW State Natural Disaster Risk Assessment available from OEM and ERM studies conducted by LEMCs.

The hazards and risks that have been identified through the existing emergency risk management process are rated and listed. These are the types of emergencies that REMC members are required to plan for support response operations to or undertake recovery activities in.

Key elements that vary to the Local EMPLAN template include:

### **Annexure A – Regional Profile**

1. *Future vulnerabilities and trends* - all sub-headings within Part 2 must include consideration and commentary regarding future projected trends within the Region particularly where potential vulnerabilities arise and dependencies are identified.
2. *Historical Events* – this section should outline significant historical emergency events and incidents that have occurred in the Region requiring significant regional support or control.

### **Annexure B – Hazards and Risks Summary**

1. *Risk Controls* – Likelihood and Consequence have been replaced with a column called Risk Controls. Rather than require REMCs to re-assess all hazards and their risk ratings at a Regional level, they are required to confirm what broad measures are in place to mitigate or prepare for these hazards within the Region.
2. *Residual Risk Priority* – Following an assessment of risk controls, it is proposed that the REMC assign a residual risk priority of Low, Medium, High or Critical to provide a Regional priority indication.

## **6.3 Part 3 – Local Emergency Management Plans**

It is inherent that the Regional EMPLAN must have a strong link to the Local EMPLANS to ensure that community requirements and major hazards and risk identified are catered for. The intent of this section is not to extract and repeat what is already contained within Local EMPLANS, but to ensure that the REMC have analysed the information contained in Local EMPLANS and have planned for elements that may require regional support or escalation.

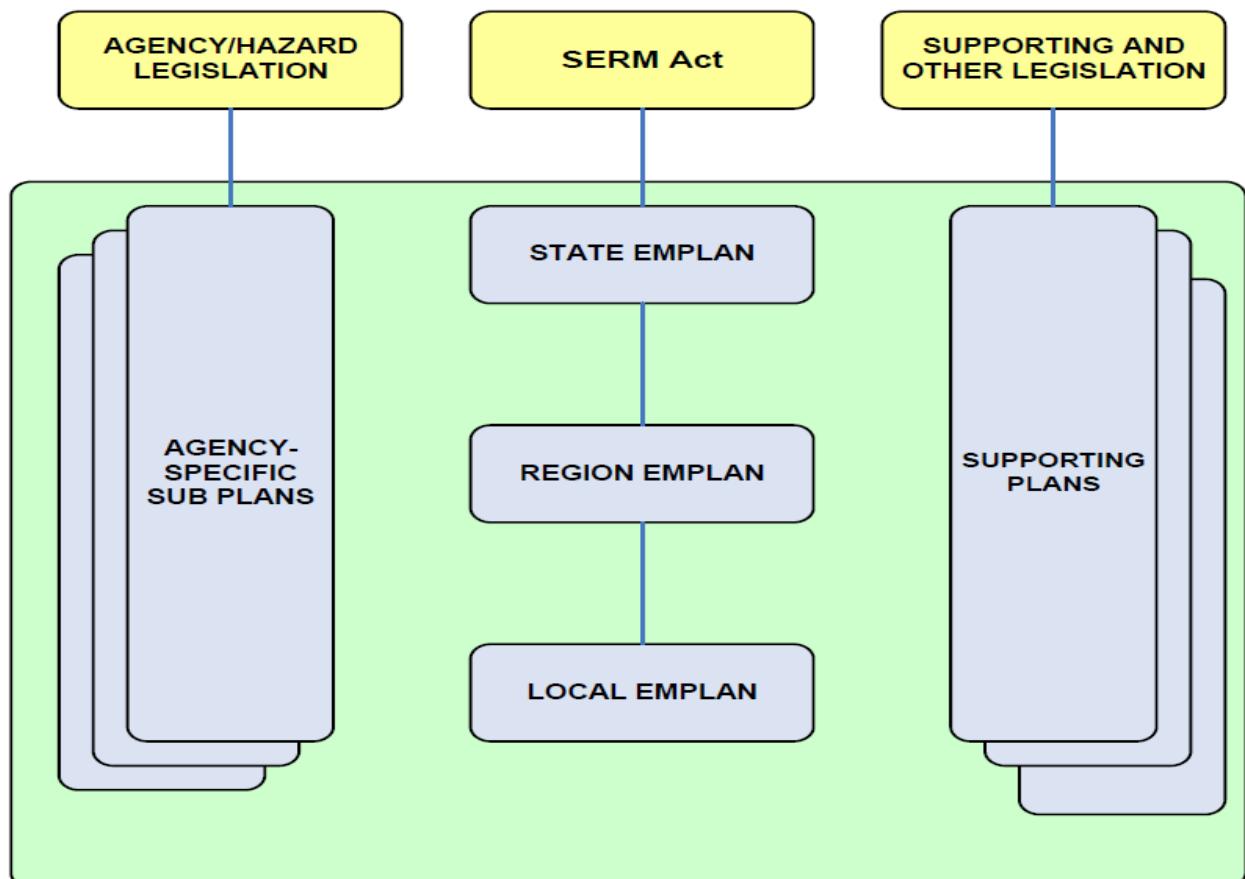


Figure 7 - Emergency Management Legislative and Policy Context

## Emergency Management Legislative and Policy Context

The two components within the Regional EMPLAN process that provide the link are:

1. The relationship and link of the REMC to Local EMPLANS, in particular the REMC role in the EMPLAN review process. This process is outlined below.

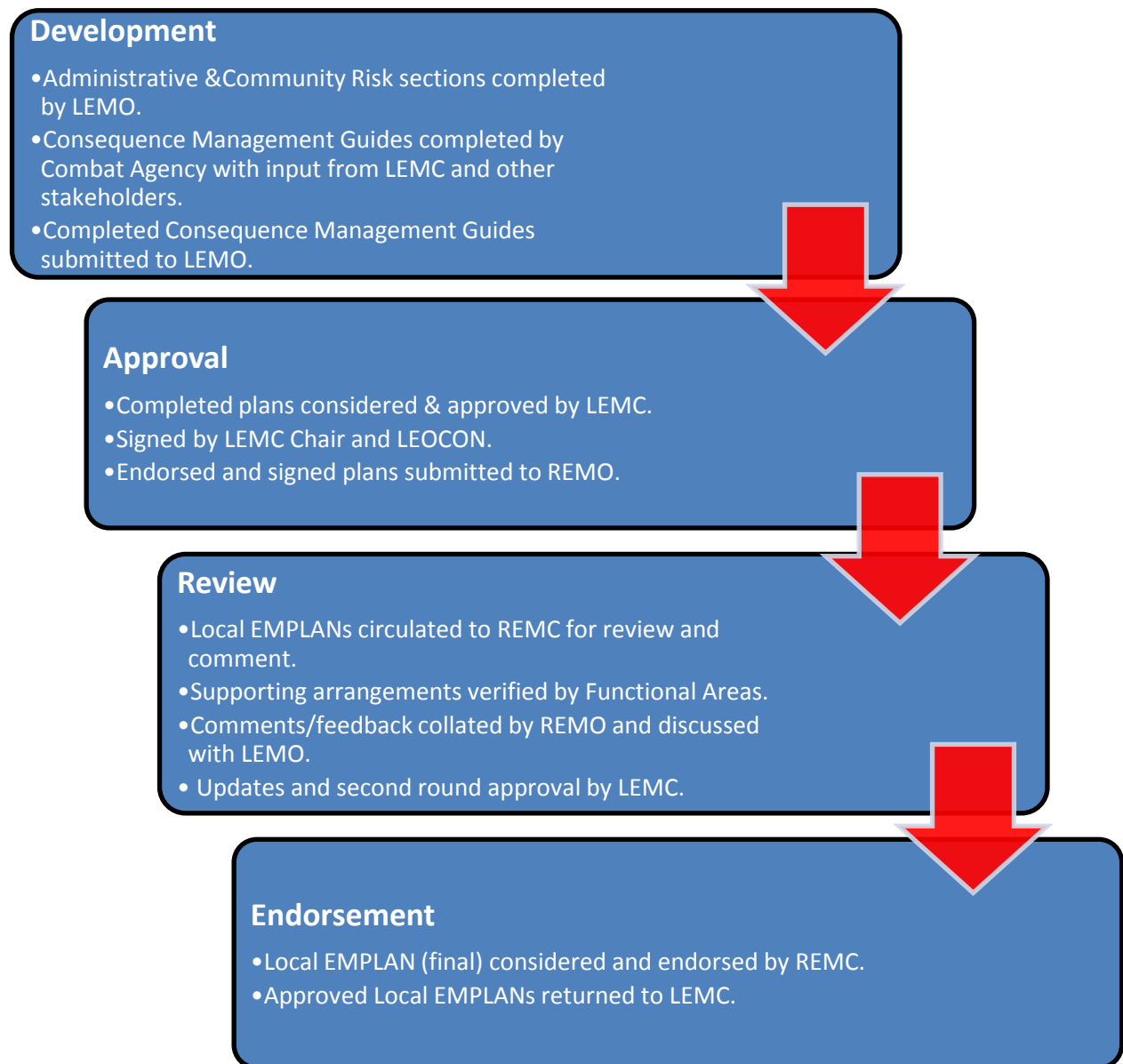


Figure 8 - Emergency Management Legislative and Policy Context

2. **Annexure C** - An inventory of Local EMPLANS for reference including their date of endorsement, review date and any specific needs for Regional support that have been identified. The heading definitions are as follows:
  - a. Local Emergency Management Committee (*LEMC*) Name
  - b. *Endorsed Date* – The date the REMC endorsed the Local EMPLAN
  - c. *Review Date* – The next scheduled review date for the Local EMPLAN
  - d. *Key Regional Planning Considerations* – A summary of key regional planning considerations or requirements identified within the Local EMPLAN

- e. *References* – Any references to elements within the Regional EMPLAN including Sub or Supporting plans that address the identified requirements.

## **6.4 Part 4 – Sub Plans and Supporting Plans**

The purpose of this plan element is to inventory all sub plans and supporting plans that will supplement the Regional EMPLAN including who within the REMC is responsible for them. A regional level response will undoubtedly require specific sub plans for features such as Major Hazard Facilities (MHF) or major transport arteries. Supporting plans will also be required from Functional Areas in particular, as to how they will support regional and local level events within their area of expertise.

Responsibility for the preparation and maintenance of appropriate sub and supporting plans rests with the relevant Combat Agency Controller or the relevant Functional Area Coordinator. This includes ensuring a thorough consultative process with the REMC and community. There may also be specific REMC sub and supporting plans that also require development to assist with delivering the outcomes of this EMPLAN such as:

- Community Engagement Strategy;
- Public Information Plan;
- Recovery Plan.

The plans will be endorsed by the REMC and kept by the REMO on behalf of the REMC. Public release versions will also be made available on the [NSW Emergency Website](#).

### ***Annexure D – Regional Sub Plan and Supporting Plan Matrices***

- *Combat Agency/Functional Area/Committee* – The entity that is responsible for sub plan or supporting plan.
- *Sub-Supporting Plan* – The name/title of the plan.
- *Triggers* – Events or occurrences will result in the activation of the plan.
- *Area(s)* – Geographic area that the supporting plan covers.
- *Access* – who from the agency or area will be the contact for activating and maintaining the plan.

## **6.5 Part 5 - Restricted Operational Information**

This part of the plan is where information about key regional assets and vulnerabilities are to be documented. It contains information about key resources and their locations, as well as information that can assist in operational planning and awareness.

This part of the plan is restricted and not to be released to the general public.

### ***Annexure E – Community Assets***

Provides an inventory of key regional resources and locations including references to sub and supporting plans where relevant. Resources may include Major Combat Agency Control /



Operations Centre(s), Regional Emergency Operations Centre(s), Major Evacuation Centres and Key Infrastructure.

### ***Annexure F – Regional Vulnerabilities***

Provides an inventory of vulnerable attributes and key resource and capacity gaps that exist within the region or have the ability to impact beyond the region:

- Vulnerable attributes may include facilities, infrastructure, populations and others, that have region wide significance (i.e. across multiple LEMCs). A source of reference would include Local EMPLANs.
- Any resource or capability gaps that are identified should classify the resource or capacity type, where it might be acquired from and, identify contacts to access such resources.

### ***Annexure G – Consequence Management Guides (CMGs)***

A Consequence Management Guide (CMG) is a hazard specific document which provides agreed emergency management arrangements in a 'checklist' concept. This is particularly useful during the initial stages of an emergency and provides for easy reference.

CMGs are not mandatory for all hazards at a Regional level, but should be developed for each hazard identified where a significant level of Regional coordination is envisaged. A CMG may also be required where a Local EMPLAN refers or defers to the Regional EMPLAN.

Generally a CMG should be drafted for any ***residual risk priorities*** that are categorised as ***high and above***.

The Combat Agency is responsible for leading a collective discussion with the REMC and preparing CMGs relevant to their hazard. Where there is no combat agency for the assigned regional hazard the REOCON is responsible for leading the collective discussion and preparing the CMG.

A CMG is not required where there is an endorsed Regional sub plan for a specific hazard. However, a CMG may also be developed where the sub plan does not fully address consequence management aspects. A CMG may be developed for both individual townships/sites or entire Regions and to inform activities that require significant co-ordination e.g. mass evacuation.

Where an agency is responsible for the planning for a particular hazard, it should ensure comprehensive consultation with members of the REMC and other stakeholders identified as requiring actions under the sub or supporting plan.

Regional Emergency Management planning is a collaborative process undertaken with the REMC. Whilst led by the Combat Agency, the development of individual CMG requires input from REMC members and other identified stakeholders. Discussion (or desk top) exercises are an excellent way to facilitate this planning process.

### **Box 1. General Description**

Provide a short description of the hazard including recent/historic events and possible effects on the region. Select the relevant risk and risk rating using the drop down box.

### **Box 2. Control**

Specify the Combat Agency identified under EMPLAN for the hazard or the REOCON where there is no Combat Agency. Identify where the Combat Agency Operations Centre is located.

### **Box 3. Command/Co-ordination**

Identify the REOCON and where the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is located.

### **Box 4. Triggers**

Specify what occurrences or measures will be used to identify when these arrangements will be enacted.

### **Box 5. Strategies**

Up to five (5) key strategies may be detailed to inform outcomes required to be achieved by the EOC. These should be high level in nature and align with the actions listed in Box 6.

### **Box 6. Actions**

The table for actions should outline all the areas of impact on the community that requires a response, management decision or coordination to achieve.

The primary elements that should be considered are already populated within most of the major hazard templates. There is room for the REMC to identify other community elements within the regional area for inclusion.

### **Box 7. Recovery**

Address only the key considerations that need to occur to initiate the recovery process and inform the requirement for the REMC to meet and determine recovery committee requirements (including Impact Assessment process). This may include the development of [Recovery Plans or Guidelines](#).

### **Box 8. Supporting Documents**

List the documents directly related to the hazard that may require referencing as part of the operational planning or response. This may include Regional documents as well as Local and State level documents.

### **Box 9. Major Evacuation Centres**

The REMC is required to maintain a Major Evacuation Centre (MEC) Register, including summary and audit reports. Utilise the register to identify which evacuation centres are suitable for use with consideration to those that are outside of the hazard threat area. For additional information regarding MECs, refer to the [NSW Major Evacuation Centre Guideline](#).

### **Box 10. Vulnerable Facilities & Infrastructure**

Identify and list the vulnerable facilities (e.g. schools, nursing homes) and infrastructure (e.g. electricity sub stations, water treatment plants) that interface with the hazard area (i.e. flood/bush fire prone areas) and may be impacted.

**Box 11. Notes**

This section provides the ability for information, general considerations etc to be documented.

**Box 12. Approval**

The REOCON (REMC Chair) and Combat Agency representative approve individual CMGs on behalf of REMC members.