

Emergency Management Planning: Assuring your plan

The *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (EMLA Act) was passed through Parliament in August 2018, and seeks to address known and documented risks in emergency management planning by establishing an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated framework for emergency management planning.

The EMLA Act requires that each emergency management plan be provided to the relevant approver alongside a Statement of Assurance (SoA). The SoA will assist relevant preparers – and approvers – to determine if emergency management plans have been prepared in accordance with the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (as amended by the EMLA Act) and with due regard to applicable guidelines.

The following key steps apply across each of the three planning levels:

1. The relevant preparer develops the plan. The chairperson – or other relevant representative – signs the plan on behalf of the planning committee (at the regional and municipal levels);
2. The relevant preparer prepares a SoA in order to demonstrate that they have addressed specific criteria in the preparation of their plan. This occurs via the completion of an ‘assurance checklist’ that lists the requirements that the preparer must either comply with or have regard to. Once complete, a representative of the preparer signs the ‘certificate of assurance’. Both documents, provided together, constitute the SoA.
3. The relevant preparer submits the plan to the relevant approver. One or more representatives of the preparer will present the plan to the approving committee at their next scheduled meeting. Following the presentation, the relevant approver will consider both the plan and SoA before deciding to approve or decline the plan. If the plan is declined, the preparer will be asked to resubmit the plan within 12 months.
4. If approved, plans are published on relevant government/council websites and registered with the state library. The preparer is then responsible for informing each agency with a role or responsibility under the plan.

Completing the assurance checklist:

Assurance checklists reflect the requirements that the preparer must comply with, and the requirements under the guidelines that must have had regard to. The Act requires that a SoA must:

- state the extent to which the emergency management plan was prepared in accordance with the Act;
- be prepared with regard to any guidelines issued under Section 77 of the Act; and
- in the case of an updated emergency management plan, list the date on which the plan was last reviewed.

Assurance checklists are active documents and will be refined as progressive planning cycles occur.