Australian Government

National Emergency Management Agency

Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework

Capability Assessment Toolkit

Acknowledgement of Country

NEMA acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians across Australia. We pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging, and their deep knowledge of and connection to Country. We celebrate the diversity of First Nations people and their wisdom of disaster, crisis, recovery and renewal.

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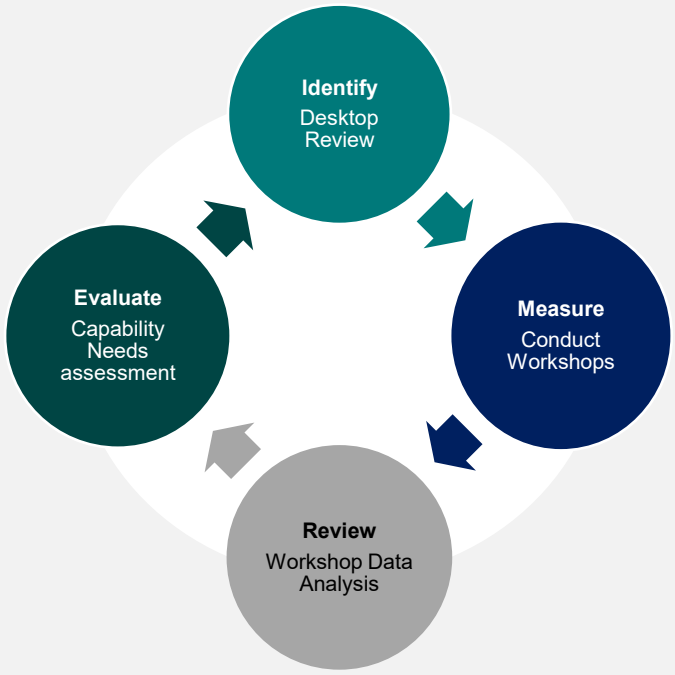
Introduction

What is the capability assessment toolkit?

The Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework (ADPF) Capability Assessment Toolkit (the Toolkit) was developed to support the operationalisation of the ADPF (Component 2. Understand capability development requirements of the Capability preparedness cycle in particular) by providing guidance on how to apply a repeatable methodology (see Figure 1) to assess maturity of the national preparedness capabilities.

Application of the repeatable methodology enables the assessment of current state preparedness capabilities, which can be used to develop preparedness action plans to address any capability gaps and requirements identified.

Figure 1: Repeatable methodology to assess capability maturity



Who is this toolkit for?

This Toolkit has been designed to support all stakeholders within Australia's emergency management ecosystem. This includes all government, non-government, private and community sector organisations across all jurisdictions.

01. Identify

Objective: Form a foundational understanding of the existing national capability base through reviewing available open-source information.

Desktop review

The desktop review involves gathering and analysing existing information to inform a baseline for current state capability and capacity.

Information can be collated from publicly available sources, including (but not limited to):

- Previous capability assessment findings
- Understanding of legislative / strategic mandates that determine capability requirements
- Risk / hazard profiles and outlook
- Data contained in asset registers about lifecycle considerations (e.g. aging / end of life)
- Findings from reviews and/or inquiries relevant to capability gaps and needs
- Scan for latest innovation and better practice

Synthesising desktop review information

When consolidating and synthesising information identified in the desktop review, consider:

- Does the information consolidated provide a comprehensive picture of current capability and capacity?
- What do the findings tell us about the changing risk context?
- Have findings that have been captured in the desktop review outline the most important and relevant information?
- Have gaps in the desktop review been identified for further exploration?

How will the desktop review be used?

The desktop review findings will be used as an input to the 02. Measure stage as a baseline for current capability and capacity. Findings may be shared ahead of time with participants to provide context ahead of the session.

02. Measure

Objective: Enhance current understanding of the current national preparedness capabilities and assess capability maturity.

Conducting capability maturity workshops

The intent of conducting capability maturity workshops is to bring emergency management stakeholders together to develop a shared understanding of capability, whether within individual teams, community groups, organisations, local councils, jurisdictions or nationally.

Objectives of the capability maturity workshop

Together, workshops participants will…

- Explore and identify stakeholder / organisation / jurisdiction owned capabilities, categorised by the national capability requirements defined in the ADPF, to establish a shared understanding of where the capability exists across the nation.
- Assess the national preparedness capabilities, considering core capability elements and overall capacity, to determine current state capability maturity.
- Discuss and agree the gaps, barriers and potential actions for improvement of each identified capability, informing opportunities for further capability investment.

Specific workshop activities to achieve the objectives can be found in **Appendix A: Capability assessment session design**.

Participants: It is recommended that sessions are limited to 20 participants as this offers diverse perspectives. Ideally the session is run by two facilitators to ensure there is a facilitator available to guide breakout sessions.

Delivery Mode: Capability maturity workshops can be run either in-person or virtually, with a preference for one or the other rather than hybrid, to ensure equitable participation.

Workshop Duration: Sessions can be delivered within a 2.5-hour timeframe (see **Appendix A: Capability assessment session design**) allowing sufficient time for both focused activities and facilitated discussions. Please note that the Sessions Design is a guide only, and longer workshop sessions can allow for further individual and group activities, and deeper discussions,

Delivery Tools and Platforms: For in-person sessions, whiteboards, flipcharts, post-it-notes and markers can be used to capture and guide the conversation and perspectives throughout the session. For online sessions, virtual whiteboards can be used in parallel with virtual meeting platforms. Online survey tools can also be used to enable real-time capture, visualisation and discussion of results

Workshop inputs

Workshop inputs include:

- Workshop agenda (see **Appendix A: Capability assessment session design**)
- Previous capability maturity workshop data (if available)
- Strategic context material (e.g. intelligence assessment on hazard types and strategic outlook for high risk weather seasons)
- Pre-reading (summary of desktop review key findings)

- One-page placemat (workshop outline and summary of desktop review key findings)

Setting the workshop context

It is important to set the scene and expectations before the workshop to ensure that agencies are transparent about deficiencies.

The workshop should commence with a clear articulation of the context. This encompasses:

Workshop scope and objectives: Establishing the purpose and intended output of the session will structure the discussions and provide participants clarity on the intended output and goal of the session.

Changing risk environment: Establishing the context for the changing risk environment is critical as it enables participants to frame their thoughts around current and emerging risks. This will enable participants to understand the risks they are baselining workshops activities against.

All-hazards: Establishing the focus that capabilities are for all-hazards ensures that participants consider all disaster scenarios when aligning on capability maturity, gaps and opportunities.

Capability gap prioritisation: outlining how workshop outputs will be prioritised and used will ensure participants understand the value and importance of their contributions in the session.

Key definitions: Outlining key definitional terms, such as 'severe to catastrophic disaster', will ensure participants are aligned on the language for activities and assessments.

Additional Workshop Guidance Material

Additional workshop guidance material has been developed to support the delivery of capability maturity workshops within agencies, organisations or teams. These details can be found in:

- **Appendix A: Capability assessment session design** (high-level session design that outlines the agenda, intent of session activities, and notes for the facilitator).
- **Appendix B: Facilitation guiding principles**, outlining the role of the facilitator and how to encourage participation.

Measuring capability maturity

The maturity level of a capability is determined by the combination of capability, capacity and the ability to fulfill the core elements of the ADPF.

Core Capability elements

The level of capability is determined by the combination of agility and capacity across the following:

- **People:** All personnel involved in undertaking emergency management activities including community, all levels of government, NGOs, agencies, businesses and volunteers.
- **Resources:** The physical assets needed to undertake emergency management activities.
- **Governance:** The enabling factors that emergency management operates within including legislation, funding, authorising environment, arrangements, doctrine and policy.
- **Systems:** The systems, including data, that are used to deliver emergency management outcomes such as learning and development, ICT, financial, & asset management.

- **Processes:** Documented or undocumented ways of delivering emergency management such as capacity planning, risk management, continuous improvement, information flow and planning.

For the purposes of measuring capability maturity, capacity is defined as the ability to sustain a response to a severe to catastrophic disaster.

Workshop guidance for assessing capability maturity

The below 5-rating scale should be used during the workshop to assess individual capability maturity. This can be done using an in house or online survey tool to seek perspectives from participants on the current capability maturity.



1. Multiple complex barriers to deploying existing capabilities, or no capability currently exists.
2. Considerable barriers to deploying existing capabilities, and/or capability is under development.
3. Some barriers and gaps to deploying existing capabilities with a potential resolution period of 6 – 12 months, or the capability is currently under development.
4. Partially prepared with deployable capabilities available to meet most of the core capacity elements and national preparedness principles.
5. Fully prepared with effective, tested, ready to deploy capabilities in place which meet the core capacity elements and national preparedness principles.

The capability goals are intended to be set by the organisation/s completing the assessment and will form the baseline for the ratings scale. What constitutes leading practice will vary depending on the nature of the organisation, and whether it is one or many organisations completing the assessment. The first step in undertaking the assessment exercise should therefore be to establish what constitutes ‘good’ vs ‘good enough’, etc.

Workshop outputs

At the conclusion of the capability maturity workshop, the facilitating organisation / jurisdiction / stakeholder will have a capture of the following data and information that can be used to inform action plans and capability development.

- Identified preparedness capability owners (i.e. jurisdictions/agencies/stakeholders)
- Maturity of each capability (nationally, and breakdowns for jurisdictions/agencies/stakeholders)
- Capability gaps and barriers to be addressed
- Opportunities and actions for further capability development

03. Review

Objective: Analyse and validate workshop outputs

Analysing session outputs

The workshop outputs are analysed to identify and articulate the capability needs across the system, including opportunities to enhance the current capabilities.

Analysing the session outputs entails:

- **Reviewing and synthesising data**
  Data collected from the workshop undergoes a data review process to ensure consistent and reliable data is used during the analytical process. This includes identifying inconsistencies, duplications or irrelevant data within the information to ensure quality and reliability for the analysis.

- **Analysing data**
  Using the synthesised data, identify themes, patterns and trends related to Australia's emergency management system preparedness and capability requirements. Findings and themes are categorised against the core capability elements (i.e. people, resources, governance, systems and processes).

- **Develop Report and share findings**
  Using the analysed data, develop a report that outlines each of the national preparedness capabilities, individual capability maturity, capability gap and barrier, and themes for further preparedness capability development.

04. Evaluate

Objective: Assess capability needs to inform development of preparedness capability action plans.

Capability needs assessment

Following assessment of capability maturity, a capability needs assessment is conducted to determine capability urgency and impact. Where capability gaps are identified from the capability maturity workshops and outputs, these should be explored further to determine the urgency and impact of these gaps to crisis management. Using the rubric below, this will enable effective prioritisation of capability gaps that should be addressed, and identification of capabilities that require immediate capability development, through internal capability uplift, and/or through partners.

Impact

Urgency	**High** *System-wide impacts* *High consequence*	**Medium** *Multiple jurisdictions or sectors impacted* *Medium to high consequence.*	**Low** *Single jurisdictional or sector impacts* *Low to medium consequence*
High *Time sensitive.* *Prevents first order consequence management functions*	**Critical**	**High**	**Moderate**
Medium *Time sensitive but second order consequence*	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**
Low *Not time sensitive*	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**

Preparedness capability action plan

The Preparedness Action Plan will be used to baseline Australia's capability to respond to severe to catastrophic events, and outlines the actions and steps that required to further build preparedness capabilities where gaps exist.

Appendix A:
Capability assessment session design

The below outlines a repeatable workshop agenda that can be used to run capability maturity workshops.

#	Title	Details
1	**Introduction** (5 min)	As part of the introduction to the session, facilitators will outline the: • Scope of the session (the purpose of the session) • Objectives (what we, as a group, are aiming to achieve within the session) • Givens (things that are out of scope or specifically not within our remit). The introduction can also be used to discuss general housekeeping and administrative points for the session.
2	**Context setting** (20 min)	Context setting is an important activity as it sets the scene for the day, outlining the focus on the specific severe to catastrophic disaster landscape. The context setting will cover topics such as: • The current capability landscape • The emerging / evolving risks • Focus on Tier-3 (severe impact/complexity) to Tier-4 (extreme to severe impact/complexity) crises (as outlined in the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework's 4-tier model for crisis coordination)
3	**Capability Mapping** (60 min)	For the first activity, participants will break into stakeholder, jurisdiction, or organisation groups to identify which national preparedness capabilities are owned, supported or delivered by their stakeholder, jurisdiction or organisation. **Activity Details:** • A whiteboard/flipchart will be set up (for online this may be a digital whiteboard) around the room for each of the preparedness capabilities. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to walk around the room and mark next to the capabilities whether they are responsible for delivering or supporting the capability. • Once capabilities are mapped to responsible owners, in stakeholder / jurisdiction / organisation groups, participants will have the opportunity to begin thinking about their preparedness capabilities, focusing on the strengths, barriers, gaps and opportunities for improvement. • After initial group discussion, participants will have the opportunity to individually walk around the room and place notes next to capabilities that outline Rose (strengths), Thorns (barriers/gaps) and Buds (opportunities for improvement). These can be distinguished by coloured post it notes or markers.

		• The facilitator will bring everyone back together to begin discussing what has been captured against each of the capabilities (identifying themes, similarities, differences and groupings). **Activity Output:** • The output of this activity is a broader understanding of where capability sits across the nation, and how to leverage each other's capabilities across jurisdictions. • Facilitated conversation will enable the identification of themes, similarities, differences and groupings.
4	**Capability Maturity Survey** (20 min)	For the second activity participants will individually be provided a survey to determine capability maturity for each of the national preparedness capabilities. The average score from this survey will inform the current state national maturity for each of the national preparedness capabilities. This approach to maturity assessment will enable participants to identify and align on the maturity of capabilities without external factors influencing their rating choices. **Activity Details:** • A survey will be provided to participants to determine capability maturity for each of the preparedness capabilities. For in-person workshops, this can be set up as a 5-point scale for each capability, allowing participants to place a sticky dot along the line to indicate individual maturity perception. For online workshops, a similar result can be achieved through virtual whiteboard. • As the survey results are collated, the facilitator will be able to hold an in-the-moment discussion with participants about how the maturity of each capability is being perceived, potential reasons for low or high maturity, and opportunities nationally for maturity improvement. • The capability needs assessment can also be conducted as part of the facilitated session, with participants comparing the criticality of capabilities to current maturity, to help identify opportunities and focus areas. **Activity Output:** • The output of this activity is an understanding of capability nationally, and across jurisdictions/agencies/organisations.
5	**Facilitated discussion** (40 min)	For the final activity of the workshop, as a whole group, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on conversations from the capability mapping activity and the results of the capability maturity survey, identifying gaps, barriers and opportunities for improvement for each of the national preparedness capabilities. This facilitated discussion is an open-ended conversation that enables participants to build on each other's ideas.

		For this activity, the facilitator may want to ask more targeted questions relating to the types of activities that may need to be conducted to enhance a specific preparedness capability.
6	**Close** (5 min)	As part of the closing remarks for the session, the facilitator will recap what was achieved throughout the session and outline how the outputs of conversations will be captured, used and shared.

Appendix B:
Facilitation guiding principles

To support the delivery of the capability maturity workshops, the below principles will support facilitation of collaborative workshops.

Role of the Facilitator

A key role of the facilitator is to actively listen and encourage meaningful conversation.

Guide conversations

When presenting the scope and objectives of the workshop, it is important to express the importance of keeping workshop conversation focussed on what we, as a nation, can do or influence to enhance the disaster preparedness capabilities.

While it is important to ensure participants are focused on the objectives of the session, the facilitator must also be conscious that open conversation can help spark new ideas. 'Parking lot' style lists (whereby thoughts that are off topic, but still important can be captured) can be utilised in the session to ensure people's ideas are heard and ensure that the session remains on topic.

Encourage participation

In larger groups 'social hiding' can occur, whereby participants are less willing to share their thoughts and perspectives. Activities should be structured to enable self-reflection and group-based activities to encourage maximum participation.

Provide Support

While activity instructions may be articulated clearly, it is important to recognise that people may not have an answer or solution to everything. As the facilitator, it is important to identify when participants may be having difficulty responding to an activity and offer encouragement and support. This can include checking whether the activity instructions are clear, whether they are missing any inputs that can support their thinking, or talking through their ideas with them.

Setting up activities

One of the key components of running an effective workshop is how the facilitator and/or facilitation team set up and deliver workshop activities. When setting up your activities, consider:

Clear instructions

Do participants have clear written/verbal instructions on how to undertake activities? It is recommended that both verbal and written instructions are provided when discussing activities to allow for multiple learning, engagement and accessibility needs (e.g. a facilitator may talk people through the activity and have printouts or presentation slides that outline the activity).

Activity resources

When running activities, confirm whether participants have appropriate resources for the activity. Examples include:

- For Capability Mapping, do participants have different coloured post-it-notes or markers to distinguish stakeholder groups from each other?

- For assessing capability maturity, does everyone have a copy of the survey or access to the digital survey?
- For online participants, do they have access to digital materials that will be used throughout the session?

Activity inputs

When running the capability maturity workshop, do participants understand the current risk landscape and purpose for the session? By providing pre-readings, current capability data or information (if available) and an outline of the workshop, participants are better able to frame their thinking around the intent and objectives of the session.

Capturing workshop activities for outputs

Whether virtual or online, a critical component of the workshop is capturing workshop conversation and activities for output documents.

Live content capture

When facilitating it can often be challenging to guide conversations and capture notes. It is recommended that another member from the facilitation team captures notes live in front of participants (e.g. on a whiteboard). This ensures all information is appropriately recorded and offers an opportunity for participants to clarify or build on points being captured.

Whiteboard / flipchart capture

Whether online or in-person, it is important to confirm that all post-it-notes, whiteboards or digital mediums have been captured and/or saved before cleared. A safe way to ensure content is captured is to take photos of the outputs (where possible) and mark the whiteboard / flipchart with a tick (representing that content has been captured). This ensures that no content from the day is accidentally cleared before capture.

Appendix C:
National capability requirements

Since the development of the ADPF in 2018, Australia's preparedness capabilities have been assessed against global emergency management framework equivalents, and learnings from recent extreme to catastrophic crises across the nation. This has enabled NEMA to identify critical gaps and opportunities to enhance the ADPF and identify capabilities that support Australia to prepare for and deal with these significant crises.

Five Core Capability Elements

The national preparedness capabilities provide a foundation to progress the collective understanding of what is needed for our nation to be better prepared to deal with extreme to catastrophic crises. Using a defined list of core capability requirements, stakeholders across Australia's emergency management ecosystem are able to identify the themes, patterns and gaps within the capability, supporting the maturity assessment of each capabilities maturity.

The core capability elements include:

People	• Culture • Capacity • Staff and Volunteers • Non-Government Organisations	• Community • Private Sector • Knowledge / Expertise • Technical Skills
Resources	• Physical Assets • Infrastructure • People • Equipment	• Personal Protective Equipment • Capacity • People • Financial
Governance	• Policy • Authorising Environment • Coordinating Arrangements • Legal Frames	• Reporting • Structure • Standards
Systems	• Asset Management • ICT Infrastructure and Systems • Knowledge management	• Intelligence • Work, Health and Safety • Learning and Development
Processes	• Quality Control • Documented Information Flow • Undocumented Information Flow • Risk Management	• Training • Exercising • Planning