



## Emergency Services information sheet

### **SWEC and the role of its members**

The State Welfare Emergency Committee (SWEC) was formed by the Department of Communities (Communities) to bring together government and non-government organisations, agencies and non statutory volunteer groups to assist them coordinate State welfare requirements arising from a disaster.

In recognition of this vital service, the State Government has tasked Communities to coordinate a welfare response in the event of a disaster.

Under the Western Australian emergency management arrangement, Communities is responsible for providing welfare support to those involved in a disaster.

One of the major requirements in an emergency is the provision of welfare services to those who have been displaced, disadvantaged or had their lives and livelihood disrupted.

Welfare services provided for by SWEC include:

#### **Emergency accommodation**

The provision of temporary shelter for persons rendered homeless.

#### **Emergency catering**

Emergency catering provides sustenance for the evacuees and welfare workers.

#### **Emergency clothing and personal incidentals**

Services provided include essential clothing and personal incidentals, such as toiletries.

#### **Personal services**

The provision of services that ensure affected persons receive the necessary personal support to cope with the affects of loss, stress, confusions and family disruption.

#### **Registration and reunification**

The implementation of a registration and reunification system enables individuals to be traced, families reunited and inquiries answered.

#### **Financial assistance**

The provision of financial assistance including personal hardship and distress relief payments, disaster relief payments, special benefits and other forms of financial emergency assistance.

### **Role of the Department of Communities**

One of Communities main roles is to coordinate the agencies that can deliver these emergency welfare services.

They are also responsible for their function if the agency isn't available.

Communities provides a welfare co-ordinator and central co-ordination facility where it can manage the various welfare centres, emergency accommodation,



## What is SWEC

personal services, financial services and registration.

### SWEC members

A number of organisations – both statutory and voluntary have accepted specific tasks and responsibilities under State Emergency Welfare Plan and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).

The following is an example of some of the SWEC members and the role they play in the event of an emergency.

#### The Australian Red Cross

Red Cross is responsible for the registration of evacuees and the management of subsequent inquiries through the Register.Find.Reunite. system.

Red Cross provides trained volunteers who can be called upon to enter data, staff telephone lines in the State Inquiry Centre and offer general assistance during a disaster.

Red Cross volunteers also provide personal support to people affected by an emergency at evacuation centres, welfare centres, recovery centres or through doorknocking in affected areas following an event.

#### Centrelink

Centrelink has a multi-functional role when disaster occurs. They provide short or long term financial assistance to people whose lives have been disrupted by a disaster.

Centrelink also works to ensure the continuity of services provided on behalf of its client agencies is maintained or restored with minimal disruption to customers.

#### Department for Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)

DFES assists with policy and logistics in the implementation of emergency plans and during their activation.

#### St John Ambulance

The main role of the Volunteer First Aid Service of St. John Ambulance Australia (VFAS) is to provide first aid at evacuation or welfare centres.

#### Salvation Army

The Salvation Army manages emergency catering and personal services to State and Local Welfare Centres. They provide a Support Agency Officer, emergency clothing if required and basic incidentals such as toiletries.

#### Country Women's Association (CWA)

The CWA assists the Salvation Army with the provisions for emergency catering at State and Local Welfare Centres and also provide a Support Agency Officer.

#### Volunteering WA

Volunteering Western Australia supports SWEC by providing assistance with training and community education.



## What is SWEC

### **Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)**

ADRA assist in the management of short to medium term accommodation services for people affected by a disaster, evacuees and emergency service workers.

There are a number of agencies that may be co-opted to assist during an emergency.

- Department of Health
- Department of Education
- Department of Indigenous Affairs
- WA Local Government Association

The role of each co-opted agency is individually negotiated with each agency and entered into the emergency management plan depending on the nature of the emergency.

For more information about SWEC contact the Department Communities Emergency Services Unit on 6217 8190

### **Further information**

To find out more about SWEC please visit our website.

[www.communities.wa.gov.au](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au)

[emergencyservices@cpfs.wa.gov.au](mailto:emergencyservices@cpfs.wa.gov.au)

08 6217 8190