Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

Strategic Review

Report

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Contents

Executive Summary

The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection (the Handbook Collection) provides nationally consistent, open access principles and good practice guidelines on disaster management practices. The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) Governance Committee agreed to a review of the Handbook Collection to ensure that it is strategically aligned with Australia's disaster management frameworks. The review was conducted by the Knowledge Development team in AIDR and consisted of a literature review, environmental scan of existing guidelines, meetings with international organisations, a survey of handbook stakeholders and a mapping exercise. This report presents the findings and makes recommendations for further action.

The literature review found that the methodology of developing good practice, evidence informed guidance in disaster risk reduction (DRR) is not well documented in the research. Meetings with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the United States, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Public Safety Canada and the Directorate-General European Commission Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) helped us develop an understanding of good and best practice in guideline development. A survey with 137 responses helped understand which sectors were using the handbooks and how they were being used. Overall, the methodology to produce and review the handbooks generally follows best practice approaches and the handbooks are widely used and well regarded.

The Handbook Collection, part of the disaster management sector since the late 1980s, does have strong strategic alignment with Australia's disaster management frameworks. A mapping activity has found that 13 Handbooks align with the Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework (ADPF), 8 with the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (NDRRF) and the Second National Action Plan (NAP), and one with the Australian Disaster Recovery Framework (ADRF).

The mapping exercise identified several gaps in policy priorities of significance, predominantly in the DRR space. These include on topics such as:

- community-based risk reduction
- financing and governing DRR
- foresight, impact and needs assessment
- mass care.

The review also identified that some existing handbooks played different roles; some were foundational in nature, whereas others were more practical how-to guidance. To help guide the organisation of the Handbook Collection, it is recommended that Natural Hazard Research Australia's (NHRA) approach of organising research themes could be used to give the Handbook Collection a clearer structure. These are:

- foundational
- functional
- driving change.

Furthermore, it is recommended that foundational content, currently *Systemic Disaster Risk* and the *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* handbooks, could be expanded to include a handbook focusing on the foundations of DRR, resilience and recovery.

It is recommended that the consensus approach currently utilised to develop the handbooks should be strengthened through ensuring diverse voices are specifically sought during the review period. The best approach to ensuring diverse voices are included in handbook development needs to be identified. Introducing a period of public consultation or comment would also add further rigor to production of the handbooks. The process for the incorporation of lessons management processes, inquiries, peer reviewed research and other insights should be developed to ensure that the handbooks maintain currency. Finally, a capability development program should be explored to further assist with the implementation of the handbooks through embedding their content in practice.

Recommendations are made throughout the report and are summarised in Chapter 8.

This report was compiled by the AIDR Knowledge Development team: John Richardson and Dr Isabel Cornes. We welcome any enquiries related to the review or the contents of this report via enquiries@aidr.org.au

1. Introduction

In Australia, disasters are increasingly affecting more individuals and communities. In recent years there has been an increase in concurrent and consecutive disaster events, in addition to effects that may compound beyond the initial hazard impact. These events are now being conceptualised as polycrises, which if left unaddressed will draw an increasing number of resources into reactive responses rather than into prevention and building long term resilience.[1] There is also a growing appreciation of the complexity of disasters, as the emergency management (EM) sector increasingly understands the interconnected nature of the systems at risk and those that contribute to risk.[2]

The systemic disaster risk environment is rapidly changing through new and emerging risks, climatic shifts, increasing geopolitical uncertainty, radical shifts in frontier technologies, a hyper reliance on interconnected systems, increasing inequality, evolving expectations and resource degradation.[3] [4] [5] The knowledge needed by individuals, organisations, governments and the DRR and resilience system to navigate these volatile and complex environments is changing and evolving constantly.

Decision making, governance, policy and practice in reducing disaster risk and impacts is informed by good knowledge management. Knowledge management is an integrated, systematic process for collecting, analysing and integrating isolated data into useable bodies of knowledge, and making that knowledge available so that it can be shared and improve the performance of practitioners, organisations and sectors. As the volume of data an organisation needs to process increases, the requirement to manage knowledge becomes critical to support decision making, growth as a learning organisation and the stimulation of cultural change and innovation.[6]

A large amount of the nationally consistent, open access knowledge for policy makers and practitioners to make informed decisions about DRR and resilience is held in the Handbook Collection. The Handbook Collection currently consists of 19 handbooks, with one new handbook currently under development. The Handbook Collection is managed by AIDR on behalf of the Australian Government and provides guidance on national principles and good practices for DRR and resilience. This also includes preparedness for effective response, in line with Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework).

The Handbook Collection:

- provides an authoritative, trusted and freely available source of knowledge about disaster resilience principles in Australia
- aligns national disaster resilience strategy and policy with practice, by guiding and supporting jurisdictions, agencies and other organisations and individuals in their implementation and adoption

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[1] UNDRR Global Assessment Report 2023
[2] Australian Government (2020) *Crisis Appreciation Strategic Planning Guidebook*
[3] National Emergency Management Agency (2023) Statement of *Strategic Intent*
[4] Australian institute for Disaster Resilience (2023) *Australia's Riskscape*
[5] National Emergency Management Agency (2023) *Strategic Intent*
[6] Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (2019) *Lessons Management Handbook*

- highlights and promotes the adoption of good practice in building disaster resilience in Australia
- builds interoperability between jurisdictions, agencies, the private sector, local businesses, and community groups by promoting use of a common language and coordinated, nationally agreed principles.

In the context of frequent hazards, national policy change, the creation of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and the development of the Second NAP for the NDRRF, it was agreed in April 2023 by the AIDR Governance Committee that the Handbook Collection needed to be reviewed to ensure its ongoing alignment with strategic directions. In addition, the review could identify where there may be gaps in knowledge. The purpose of the review was to:

1. Map the Handbook Collection against key disaster management frameworks.

2. Identify which strategies and capabilities within the national disaster management frameworks lend themselves to needing national principles and practice guidance within AIDR's remit.

3. Identify which handbooks are needed and whether there are overlaps in the existing handbooks that could be streamlined – developing a plan for handbooks for the future.

4. Consider how the handbooks are structured and how content is delivered.

The review process has been managed by the AIDR Knowledge Development team as part of its core business. The review involved an environmental scan of existing disaster management guidelines, a literature review of good and best practice guideline development, a stakeholder survey of handbook users and meetings with international organisations that develop DRR and EM guidelines, as well as several informal conversations with key stakeholders.

2. Background of the Handbook Collection

The first publications in the original Australian Emergency Manual Series ('Manual Series') were mainly skills reference manuals produced from 1989 onwards. In August 1996, on advice from the National Emergency Management Principles and Practice Advisory Group, the Manual Series was expanded to include a more comprehensive range of EM principles and practice reference publications. In 2016, AIDR was appointed custodian of the handbooks and manuals in the series.

The Handbook Collection is developed and reviewed by national consultative working groups and/or steering committees, representing a range of state and territory agencies, governments, organisations, universities and practitioners involved in DRR and resilience. The authorising environment for the Handbook Collection rests with a Senior Executive Service (SES) officer of NEMA, after sign-off by the AIDR Governance Committee.

AIDR continues to update and grow the Handbook Collection, providing guidance on the national principles and practices in DRR and resilience in Australia. It comprises principles, strategies and actions compiled by practitioners with disaster management and service-delivery experience, researchers and policy makers. Most of the handbooks in the Handbook Collection are supported by companion documents, quick guides, webinars and tools, where capacity exists for the development of these additional resources.

Each handbook in the Handbook Collection is required by the current handbooks policy to be reviewed every five years. Currently, the identification of handbooks for review or development is determined through a prioritisation process that considers:

- the age of the handbook
- relevance and currency of existing handbooks
- requests and recommendations from stakeholders and users
- relevant current and emerging areas of research
- Australian Government priorities including new policy directions
- recent projects supported by the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) with content relevant to current and future publications
- known development(s) in practice
- needs identified by disaster resilience and EM stakeholders
- content that is suggested for update by authoritative users who can demonstrate a clear need for review
- known gaps in the Handbook Collection
- resources available to conduct the review.

Prioritisation and final authorisation of the Handbook Collection program of work each financial year rests with the AIDR Governance Committee. The governance committee is comprised of members of NEMA, AFAC, Australian Red Cross and AIDR. AIDR is currently contracted to deliver two handbooks (new or revised) per year.

3. Strategic context

The national strategic policy context for the Handbook Collection includes:

- The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience
- National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and the Second National Action Plan
- Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework
- Australian Disaster Recovery Framework.

Through these frameworks the Handbook Collection contributes to global risk reduction as articulated by the Sendai Framework. In terms of strategic organisational context, the Handbook Collection contributes to:

- NEMA Statement of Strategic Intent
- AIDR Strategy 2020-25
- AFAC's Doctrine Framework.

The Handbook Collection could also contribute to the future National Resilience Framework, under development by the National Resilience Taskforce.[7]

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[7] Minister for Home Affairs Media Release, 8th December 2022, National Resilience Taskforce.

4. Literature review and environmental scan

A literature review was undertaken of open access, peer-reviewed publications in English. This literature review identified sources that described conceptual frameworks for managing knowledge. It also sought to identify the methodologies utilised to develop good knowledge development practice guidelines for DRR and resilience. While a range of guidelines and doctrine specific to DRR and resilience exist in Australia and internationally, there is a lack of detail and clarity about the methodology used to develop such guidelines.

The literature review identified a significant gap in the evidence base on the methodologies for developing good practice guidelines in the context of DRR and resilience. Due to this finding, the team also examined approaches and literature related to guideline development from the health, defence and social work sectors.

An environmental scan was also conducted to understand the public availability of principles and good practice guidance globally that may be similar in its focus and intent to the Handbook Collection. In addition, the environmental scan was used to review and compare current good practices in the methodologies of guideline development. Only open-access guidelines available to the public were included for consideration. This scan also revealed a significant gap in detailed methodology for developing good practice guidelines in the disaster and EM sectors. Most of the work into the methodologies of guideline development has been undertaken within the medical field in relation to developing clinical guidelines for health practitioners.

The following are a selection of open access sources of DRR, EM guidance and/or doctrine identified by the team.

Institution	Guideline/Doctrine Collection	Purpose
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center	Guidelines for Asian countries in a range of languages	ADPC approaches are comprehensive in enhancing capacities of countries by utilizing science-based information; strengthening governance systems for effective risk management at all levels; and by improving grounded application of disaster and climate risk reduction measures in sustainable development.
Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC)	Includes: key themes of resilient communities, trusted response, credible information, sage, capable and diverse workforces, knowledge innovation and research, and effective and transparent governance	AFAC Doctrine suite of capstone, fundamental and procedural doctrine for EM agencies aligned to Six Strategic Directions.
Australian Red Cross	Includes: Emergency Services Outreach Guidelines, Supporting Communities Before, During and After Collective Trauma Events, Emergency Sheltering	

	Management Handbook, Psychosocial Guidelines for Temporary Memorial Management	
Emergency Planning College UK Cabinet Office	Includes: Insight from EPC short guides, position papers, and occasional papers National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums	Provides short guides and position papers focussed on key areas within crisis management, emergency preparedness and resilience.
Directorate-General European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO)	Includes: Disaster Preparedness Disaster Risk Mitigation	Guidelines for field partners to support the implementation of EU-funded programs.
Federal Emergency Management Agency, United States of America	FEMA Guidance Documents	A FEMA guidance document, as defined by Executive Order 13891, is "an agency statement of general applicability, intended to have future effect on the behaviour of regulated parties, that sets forth a policy on a statutory, regulatory, or technical issue, or an interpretation of a statute or regulation."
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) World Bank Group	Including: International Guideines on Nature-based solutions for flood risk management, Post-disaster needs assessment guidelines, Urban flood risk handbook, Disaster recovery guidance series, How to make cities more resilient handbook.	Guidance documents largely targeted at low- and middle-income countries to understand, manage and reduce risks from natural hazards.
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC)	Including: Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Guidelines, Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas Handbook, Contingency Planning Guide, Guide to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation. A range of guidelines also available on the Anticipation Hub from National Societies of IFRC.	Guidance documents largely targeted at supporting National Societies/staff/volunteers of the IFRC and other international humanitarian organisations in their operations, but publicly available for non-commercial use.
JESIP	Including: Joint Doctrine MAIC Guidance IOR Guidance	Models and principles for incident management agency interoperability in the UK.
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction	Words into Action Guides	WiA are a series of guidelines, based on global expertise, communities of practice, and networks of DRR practitioners. The guidelines provide practical, specific advice on implementing a people-centred approach to DRR

		in line with the Sendai Framework.

Table 1: Selection of identified DRR/EM Guidelines

4.1 What is knowledge management?

Knowledge management is a key element of reducing disaster risk. This is recognised in NDDRF and the Second NAP. The Second NAP explicitly states that an effective, connected and multidisciplinary DRR knowledge system must exist to research, develop, translate and share the information and data needed about disaster risk so that it can be managed. It identifies the following outcome under *Priority 1 Understand Disaster Risk: An effective and connected disaster risk reduction knowledge system that provides a solid foundation for action.*

The ADPF also identifies the importance of knowledge in capacity and capability. It is important to have people with knowledge and skills, with a focus on leadership skills, technical skills, and a culture of working as one.

At the international level, the Sendai Framework highlights the importance of knowledge in reducing disaster risk. The Sendai Framework notes the importance of building the knowledge of government officials at all levels, civil society, communities and volunteers, as well as the private sector. Building knowledge can be through sharing experiences, lessons learned, good practices and training and education on DRR, including the use of existing training and education mechanisms and peer learning.[8]

Knowledge management is a continuous iterative process of providing decision makers and other stakeholders with a comprehensive but clear understanding of complex concepts and environments. It is a systematic process by which knowledge needed for an organisation to succeed is created, captured, shared and leveraged.[9] The basic tenets of knowledge management are to improve decision making, foster innovation, build relationships, establish trust, share information and improve lessons management systems.

Knowledge management includes understanding data (by classification and rational presentation), synthesising it (by selection, analysis, interpretation, adaptation, or compression), making it useful (by presenting arguments, matching needs, and problems, assessing advantages and disadvantages) and considering options for selection. It is a continuous process. It also includes relationships and interactions between systems and stakeholders.[10] It can include the development of resources, as well as the formation of personal or technical networks.

4.2 Knowledge management in DRR

UNDRR produces a series of guidelines based on global expertise, communities of practice and networks of DRR practitioners. The guidelines provide practical, specific advice on implementing a people-centred approach to DRR in line with the Sendai Framework.

At the National level, NEMA are the owners of the Handbook Collection on behalf of the Australian Government, as well as also hosting the Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning Guidebook. Reports

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[8] Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 Priority 1, 24 (g)
[9] AIDR (2021) Lessons Management Handbook.
[10] https://www.nrdc-ita.nato.int/33/knowledge-development

such as Australia's National Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework are an excellent source of DRR practice in Australia.

In addition to the doctrine developed by AFAC, the AFAC Collaboration Group 'Knowledge Innovation Research Utilisation Network' (KIRUN) is currently developing a knowledge management doctrine for approval by the AFAC Council.

At the state and territory level, the Inspector General of Emergency Management (IGEM) in Queensland has developed a *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland*. It is outcomes focused and fits within a broader Emergency Management Assurance Framework. It outlines what good practice looks like within the framework, which are scalable, comprehensive, interoperable, value driven and adaptable.[11] The standard also identifies doctrine as the ideas, strategies and guiding principles contained in the documents that guide disaster management. These align with legislation, reflect good practice, and include guidelines, policies, plans and procedures.

Emergency Management Victoria has a range of guidance on managing emergencies, including Foundations of Emergency Management, Victorian Preparedness Framework, Community Resilience Framework, Community Based Emergency Management.

4.3 Knowledge management in the defence sector

Doctrine is a term often used to describe best practice guidance within the EM sector.[12] [13] Doctrine is also the term used by the defence sector. The defence approach suggests that doctrine consists of fundamental principles by which defence forces guide their actions in support of national objectives. It constitutes official advice but requires judgment in application. It is a body of carefully developed, sanctioned ideas which have been officially approved or ratified, and not dictated by any one individual. Doctrine establishes a common frame of reference including intellectual tools that commanders use to solve defence related problems. It is also identified as a guide for action rather than a fixed set of rules. It identifies different levels of doctrine from high level capstone or foundational, through to tactical operational guidance.[14]

Characteristics of doctrine include:

- A set of principles that can be applied in a range of situations.
- A guide on how to think – not what to think – and provides a common approach to practical problem solving.
- Capturing the official view of the leaders of the organisation on what is best practice and what should be done 'in the field.'
- It is evidence-based and is updated to reflect new learnings.[15]

4.4 Knowledge management in the health sector

The health and medical fields were identified in the literature review as having the most comprehensive research and critical analysis on methodologies for clinical practice guideline development. Clinical practice guidelines are "a systematically developed statement to assist

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[11] Inspector General of Emergency Management (2019) *Standard for Disaster Management in Queensland*
[12] Curtis E Lemay Center (n.d.): *A Primer on Doctrine*
[13] British Army (2011) *Army Doctrine Primer*
[14] Ibid
[15] Metropolitan Fire Service (2018) *Organisational Doctrine*

practitioner and patient decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances."[16] The medical field also has well-established global research institutes and methodologies for the development of clinical guidelines (e.g. World Health Organisation (WHO), Cochrane, National Institute for Health, and Care Excellence (NICE)[17]). Within the Australian context, the National Health and Medical Research Council have Standards for Guidelines, released in 2016. There are also a range of professional development associations that support the continued improvement of methodologies for rigorous guideline development, such as Guidelines International Network (GIN).

The WHO has a Handbook for Guideline Development (2014) for the range of WHO Guidelines that are available in both clinical guidance through to public policy. WHO Guidelines must address an area of uncertainty and an unmet need for guidance. The process for developing recommendations is explicit and transparent in that the reader can see how and why a recommendation was developed, by whom and on what basis. The process is multidisciplinary and aims to minimise the risk of bias in recommendations. The evidence used in developing the guidelines is publicly available. The approach to developing the guidelines, through expert consensus, also largely aligns with the approach to develop and review the Handbook Collection.

4.5 Standards

Standards Australia develops internationally aligned standards through a process of consensus. The process of development relies upon three international recognised principles:

- openness and transparency
- consensus
- balance of representation

This is achieved through the relevant technical committee identifying, with Standards Australia, the approved project scope, drafting task, timeframes and the means of monitoring the project progress. Working groups draft the standard, which is then publicly available for comment and then approved by the technical committee voting on the standard. There is a cost associated with accessing Australian and international standards.

4.6 Communities of practice

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour.[18] Three key elements are required to ensure a Community of Practice exists:

1. Domain: a shared area of interest

2. Community: members interact and learn together

3. Practice: members are practitioners who develop a shared repertoire of resource.[19]

Communities of Practice are usually characterised by the following aspects. They:

- enable practitioners to take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need

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[16] Field MJ Lohr KN Committee to Advise the Public Health Service on Clinical Practice Guidelines, Institute of Medicine *Clinical practice guidelines: directions of a new program*, 1990 Washington, DC National Academy Press

[17] NICE (2024) *Developing NICE guidelines" the Manual*

[18] Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015) Introduction to communities of practice; A brief overview of the concept and its uses. Retrieved from https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice

[19] Goodhue, R., & Seriamlu, S. (2021). A quick guide to establishing a Community of Practice. ARACY. Canberra.

- create a direct link between learning and performance
- address the tacit, dynamic and explicit aspects of knowledge creation and sharing
- are not limited by formal structures - they create connections among people across organisational and geographic boundaries
- innovate and solve problems - they invent new practices, create new knowledge, define new territory
- enable development of a collective and strategic voice.[20]

The expert working groups formed to develop the handbooks are currently time and task limited, although have also performed as a community of practice, as they possess the three key elements outlined above.

4.7 Conclusion

The process of scanning the literature has suggested that processes undertaken by AIDR to develop the handbooks generally aligns with good practice. One of the recommendations of this project will be to publish a paper in the Australian Journal of Emergency Management to strengthen the evidence base around the development of knowledge and good practice guidance in DRR.

Recommendations:

- Develop a DRR Guidance Development practice paper for publication in the Australian Journal of Emergency Management.
- Explore the further development of handbook working groups into topic specific communities of practice.

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[20] Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015) Introduction to communities of practice; A brief overview of the concept and its uses. Retrieved from https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice

5. Meetings with guideline developers

Part of examining methodologies of guideline development involved meeting with other national and international organisations that produce and share open-access guidelines. The following organisations were contacted and interviewed about how they develop and maintain their doctrine and/or good practice guidelines:

- AFAC
- DG ECHO
- FEMA, United States
- Public Safety Canada
- UNDRR

The following questions were asked of the interviewees:

- What is the method you use to develop your guidelines?
- How do you ensure they align with policy frameworks?
- Who uses your guidelines and how do you measure that usage?
- How do you identify gaps?

The results of these interviews have been integrated into the findings below. UNDRR and FEMA had a significant program of the development of DRR guidance. Public Safety Canada did not have examples of DRR guidance, as this was not within their remit as a federal agency, however they were able demonstrate their processes of policy development through examples such as their First National Risk Assessment, and their review of Disaster Funding Arrangements. DG ECHO also has several practice guidance documents that help member states agencies with their planning.

6. Survey results

To further develop our understanding of the ways in which the Handbooks are currently being utilised and by whom, a public survey was developed and delivered via Survey Monkey from late May to early September 2023. The survey consisted of 10 questions. The questions were designed to develop an understanding of the current use of the Handbooks in the Handbook Collection, the extent to which they are shared amongst Handbook user's networks, and the strengths and gaps evident in the current Handbook Collection. The questions were predominantly open-ended to allow respondents to provide answers that the team may not have considered. This avoided limiting respondents to a pre-defined set of answers. There were 137 complete responses received.

Broadly, the responses showed that the Handbooks are well received by practitioners across a range of sectors, including the traditional EM sector. Respondents reported utilising the Handbooks in a variety of ways including:

- As course material for several Australian University undergraduate and masters subjects, in addition to diplomas, graduate certificates, and professional certifications.
- As reference material for current and new job roles.
- As reference material in presentations.
- As reference material to communicate terms and complex topics to stakeholders and community.
- As recommended reading material for new recruits in various roles.
- As material for developing and delivering training, workshops, and exercises.
- As a formal research resource and self-directed education resource – particularly when other training or support is not available.
- To compare local policy and ANZPAA procedure.
- To develop local community resilience programs.
- To develop and review policies, procedures, plans, sub-plans, and strategies in organisations, and local and state government.
- To inform recommendations or public policy asks in government submissions.
- To inform internal and external risk assessments at state, regional and local government levels.
- To inform the development of EM arrangements in biosecurity and agriculture department.
- As reference material in the development of/feedback on international standards.
- To ensure organisational/department alignment with good practice.
- As an advocacy tool on how to 'do' disasters differently.

These findings were also reflected in the results of the AIDR Stakeholder Survey among the 309 responses to the 'how do you use the handbooks' question. Importantly, most of the respondents had also shared the Handbooks with others. This suggests that users found value not only in the Handbook(s) personally, but also saw them as a valuable resource for others learning. The full survey findings report can be found in appendix 1.

7. Review findings

The interim findings of the review cover the following areas:

1. Mapping the handbooks to current national disaster policy (and identify potential gaps)
2. Providing a framework for the handbooks
3. Guiding the future development of the Handbook Collection
4. Developing and maintaining the individual handbooks
5. Ensuring diverse voices are included in the development and content of each handbook.

7.1 Mapping to national disaster policy

The early Manual Series that evolved into the current Handbook Collection was developed in response to practical needs that emerged through operational EM activities. At this time there was limited strategic or policy intent among the Handbook Collection. This was due to the responsibilities for disaster management being held by the states and territories, with limited national policies. Prior to 2012 and the development of the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* (NSDR), there was no national framework for disaster resilience. Since this time, the handbooks have been broadly aligned to the NSDR, although there has not been specific mention of how they were supporting the priority outcomes outlined in the NSDR.

The development of the NDRRF, ADPF and the ADRF from 2017 onwards provide guidance on what strategies, outcomes and national actions are needed to reduce risk, and the types of national capabilities required to manage disasters. The NDRRF is supported in its implementation by the Second NAP, which outlines outcomes to be achieved and the national actions that are needed to achieve them. These frameworks align with the Sendai Framework, with the four priorities of the NDRRF contributing to three of Sendai's priorities, and the ADPF contributing to the fourth priority of the Sendai Framework. Preparedness for effective response has long been a goal of the global DRR mechanisms.

While not a disaster policy framework per se, NEMA's *Strategic Intent 2023* importantly sets out how it, as an agency supports these frameworks by seeking to develop, lead and coordinate Australia's connected approach to EM. The third of NEMA's Strategic Objectives, *building evidence, intelligence, and insights to empower communities, leaders and stakeholders to make effective decisions,* is the key one to consider in influencing knowledge development and the Collection.

Additionally, the National Resilience Taskforce seeks to enhance resilience by examining exposure and vulnerability to nationally significant crises, and ensuring the Australian Government has the necessary policy, legislation and capability to manage increasingly complex cascading and concurrent crises. The National Resilience Taskforce is in the process of developing a National Resilience Framework *'to bolster Australia's ability to anticipate, prevent, absorb, adapt and evolve from extreme and concurrent natural and human induced crises or shocks, regardless of how these challenges come about.'[21]*

These documents provide a clearer framework against which the Handbook Collection can be aligned and demonstrate where they can contribute to the overall goals of a disaster resilient Australia. The NDRRF has four priorities and 23 strategies. The ADPF has seven components underpinned by National Preparedness Principles and identifies a set of 21 national capabilities to progress the collective

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[21] Minister for Home Affairs Media Release, 8th December 2022, National Resilience Taskforce.

understanding of what is needed to be better prepared to deal with severe to catastrophic disasters. The ADRF describes the principles and arrangements in place that support effective, coordinated recovery for disaster impacted communities. This first iteration of the ADRF does not set out goals or priorities as the NDRRF or the ADPF.

A mapping exercise was undertaken to review the alignment of the current handbooks and their content to these frameworks. The mapping process was based on the core content of the relevant handbook and how it largely aligned with the elements of the frameworks. The handbooks were mapped against the strategies outlined in the NDRRF (and outcomes and national actions of the Second NAP), and the national capabilities in the ADPF. Other national frameworks/plans were also examined, including the National Counter Terrorism Plan, the Australian Health Arrangements and animal health emergency plans. The mapping exercise process also helped to identify where there may be gaps in supporting guidance for strategies and actions in the frameworks.

The mapping exercise found that the 19 handbooks in the collection are largely aligned with the frameworks and the Second NAP. Thirteen of the handbooks contribute to the core capabilities of the ADPF. Eight handbooks contribute to the NDRRF strategies/Second NAP Outcomes, and one contributes to the ADRF. There is some overlap between frameworks. The mapping suggests that the Handbook Collection is more strongly aligned with the priority of preparedness for effective response than the mitigation of disaster risk. This is not unexpected given the focus of disaster management until very recently has been on response, and to a lesser extent, recovery.

The handbooks also align with NEMA's Statement of Strategic Intent through contributing to the strategic objective of: *Building evidence, intelligence, and insights to empower communities, leaders, and stakeholders to make effective decisions.* It should also be noted that there are also other policy instruments that have an influence, and the Handbooks Collection may contribute to, for example the *Emergency Management Targeted Plan for Disability* as part of Australia's Disability Strategy,[22] or addressing the DRR elements of the *National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy*.[23]

7.1.1 National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

For the NDRRF, the handbooks contribute to the 2030 vision by helping:

> 'All sectors of society *understand and respond* to social environmental, technological, and demographic changes which have the potential to prevent, create or exacerbate disaster risks. They help all sectors of society make risk-informed decisions*.'*

The guiding principle of '*continual improvement, that is all sectors continuous learn and innovate to improve practices and share lessons data, and knowledge widely'* is most applicable to the contribution that the Handbook Collection makes to achieving the framework's goal. The Handbook Collection aligns with several of the 9 Outcomes and 24 National Actions detailed in the Second NAP.

Eight handbooks currently align with priorities 1, 2 and 4 of the NDRRF.

- understanding disaster risk
- accountable decisions
- governance ownership and responsibility.

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[22] Emergency Management Targeted Action Plan (disabilitygateway.gov.au)
[23] https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-climate-resilience-and-adaptation-strategy.pdf

Table 2: Mapping handbooks to NDRRF Strategies/Second NAP Outcomes

NDRRF Strategy/NAP Outcome	Handbook	Comments
Priority 1 Understanding Disaster Risk		
Strategy A: *Improve public awareness.* Outcome 1: (NAP) *An increased understanding of disaster risk across Australian society.*	*Community Engagement* *Disaster Resilience Education for Young People*	Both handbooks contribute directly to this strategy and outcome. Consideration could be given to a companion guide that provides a compendium of preparedness messages, as recommended by the Royal Commission into the National Disaster Arrangements
Strategy B: *Identify and address data information and resource gaps.* Strategy C: *Address technical barriers to data and information sharing and availability.* Strategy E: *Develop cohesive disaster risk information access and communication capabilities to deliver actionable disaster risk data and information.*	No handbook	A potential future foresight, impact and needs assessment handbook may address this area.
Strategy D: *Integrate plausible future scenarios into planning.*	*Managing Exercises*	While the current iteration of *Managing Exercises* handbook focuses upon exercising response and recovery capabilities, there may be the potential for a future version to support this strategy through the development of scenarios that can apply across risk reduction actions, as well as capability testing.
Strategy F: *Support long term research innovation and knowledge practices and disaster risk education.* Outcome 2: *An effective and connected disaster risk reduction knowledge system that provides a solid foundation for action.*	*Lessons Management*	An enhanced *Lessons Management* handbook which identifies DRR lessons and evaluations and pathways back to improved policy and practice could contribute to this strategy.
Strategy G: *Improve disclosure of disaster risk to all stakeholders.*	No handbook	
Priority 2 Accountable decisions		
Strategy A: *Consider potential avoided loss and broader benefits in all relevant decisions.*	No handbook	A future Financing DRR handbook could provide guidance on this topic.
Strategy B: *Identify highest priority disaster risks and mitigation decisions.* Outcome 3: *Disaster risk is addressed in all relevant decisions.*	*National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines* *Systemic Disaster Risk*	
Strategy C: *Build the capability and capacity of decision makers to actively address disaster risk in policy, program and investment decisions.*	*National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines*	This speaks to the need for a broader program of capability development in the DRR space. Specifically, implementing a capability development program based on

Outcome 3: *Disaster risk is addressed in all relevant decisions.*	*Systemic Disaster Risk*	enabling the knowledge within the Handbooks to be put into practice by the practitioners who are working in National/State/Local Govt, NGOs, community-based organisations would be highly valuable to address risk and inform investment.
Strategy D: *Establish proactive incentives and address disincentives and barriers to reducing disaster risk.*	No handbook	A future Financing DRR handbook could provide guidance on this topic.
Strategy E: *Maintain planning and development practices that adapt to rapid social, economic, environmental, and cultural change.* Outcome 3: Strengthen *risk-informed land-use planning, building control systems and settlement decisions to minimise the creation of new risk and address legacy risk.*	*Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities* *Managing the Floodplain*	Future urban resilience, rural and remote resilience, and natural environment resilience guidance could address this topic. The first and third topic have had scoping studies undertaken, and the second topic is the subject of a NHRA project.
Strategy F: *Promote compliance with and embed resilience requirements into relevant standards, codes, and specifications*	No handbook	AFAC doctrine, through Resilient Communities and Trusted Response, covers elements of this strategy. A potential future handbook/companion guide of built environment resilience could provide further guidance.
Priority 3 Enhanced Investment		
Strategy A: Pursue *collaborative financing commercial financing options for DRR.* Outcome 5: *Investment provides highest disaster risk reduction benefit.* Outcome 6: *Investment in resilience is attractive.*	No handbook	A future Financing DRR handbook could provide guidance on this topic.
Strategy B: *Develop DRR investment tools to provide practical guidance on investment options*. Outcome 7: *Financing and investment systems account for disaster risk and resilience.*	No handbook	The Resilient Futures Investment Roundtable tools may address this area.
Strategy C: *Leverage existing and future government programs to fund priority risk reduction.*	No handbook	A future Financing DRR handbook could provide guidance on this topic.
Strategy D: *Identify additional and future funding streams.*	No handbook	
Strategy E: *Improve the accessibility variety and uptake of insurance.*	No handbook	A future Financing DRR handbook could provide guidance on this topic.
Strategy F: *Empower communities individual and small business to make informed sustainable investment.*	No handbook	A future Financing DRR handbook could provide guidance on this topic.
Priority 4 Governance, Ownership, and Responsibility		

Strategy A: *Establish a national mechanism to oversee and guide disaster risk reduction efforts and cross sector dependence.* Strategy B: *Establish a national implementation plan.*	No handbook	These strategies should be documented in the *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* handbook.
Strategy C: *Support and enable locally led and owned place based DRR.* Outcome 8: *Disaster management arrangements are inclusive, networked and aligned, supported by meaningful partnerships.*	*Community Engagement*	While the handbook is not specifically focused on place-based DRR, the principles and strategies of the handbook could apply to this area.
Strategy D: *Incentivised improved transparency of disaster risk ownership in personal and business transactions* Outcome 9: *Increased recognition of shared ownership and responsibility for risk management.*	No handbook	A future Financing DRR handbook could provide guidance on this topic. This mechanism should be documented in the *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* handbook*.
Strategy E: *Consistently report on DRR efforts and outcomes.*	No handbook	This reporting should feed back into the handbook development and review process. Currently there is no formal feedback process. A process that considers policy developments, review, lessons and inquiry outcomes and reporting such as identified here should be developed by AIDR and NEMA to ensure the handbooks are reflecting current best practice
Strategy F: *Create clear governance pathways for pursuing DRR pathways.* Outcome 8: *Disaster management arrangements are inclusive, networked and aligned, supported by meaningful partnerships.*	No handbook	The *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* handbook has the potential to contribute to this strategy and outcome, although in its current form it is very general in focus and application, and provides guidance on what is currently in place, and not how to embed DRR into governance structures. Consideration could be given to the development of a Governing DRR handbook.

7.1.2 Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework

For the ADPF, the Handbook Collection contributes to the second goal of the framework, that is; '*Use the current work undertaken in Australia and incorporate best practice approaches to build an appropriate level of capability across Australia to manage severe to catastrophic disasters.*'

Twelve handbooks currently align directly with 10 of the 21 National Capabilities. These are detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Mapping handbooks to National Capabilities of the ADPF

National Capability	Handbook	Comments
1. Planning	*Emergency Planning Flood Emergency Planning Tsunami Emergency Planning*	While these handbooks largely focus on local level planning, the principles can be applied at all levels.
2. Warnings and information	*Public Information and Warnings Community Engagement*	
3. Fatality Management	No Handbook	A review of the *Health and Disaster Management* Handbook could see this incorporated either in the handbook or as a companion.
4. Search and Rescue	No handbook	Covered by AFAC Doctrine.
5. Civil disaster Expansion	*Communities responding to disaster: Spontaneous Volunteers*	This handbook contributes to part of this capability to meet mass community needs.
6. Public Order and Safety	No Handbook	
7. Evacuation and support	*Evacuation Planning*	
8. Mass Care	No Handbook	Elements of the *Safe and Healthy Crowded Places* handbooks contribute to this capability, however the focus of the handbook as it currently stands is more towards event planning.
9. Intelligence and situational awareness	No Handbook	Covered, in part, by AFAC Trusted Response Doctrine.
10. Responder Protection and sustainment	No Handbook	Covered by AFAC Trusted Response Doctrine.
11. Built environment and Infrastructure Recovery	*Community Recovery*	This is covered by a chapter in the community recovery handbook.
12. Logistics and supply chain management	No handbook	
13. Impact Assessment	No handbook	Covered, in part, by AFAC Trusted Response Doctrine.
14. Biosecurity	No handbook	Covered by AUSVETPLAN.
15. Hazard Response	*Incident Management Managing Exercises*	
16. Natural Environment Recovery	*Community Recovery*	This is covered by a chapter in the community recovery handbook.
17. Social Environment Recovery	*Community Recovery*	This is covered by a chapter in the community recovery handbook.
18. Crisis Leadership and Management	*Managing Exercises*	This topic is also covered by the NEMA *Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning Guidebook.*
19. Research and learning	*Lessons Management*	The lessons handbook covers one element of research and learning.
20. Economic recovery	*Community Recovery*	This is covered by a chapter in the community recovery handbook.
21. Community Planning, Capacity and Resilience Building	*Community Engagement*	Noting this National Capability aligns with Priority 1 and 4 of the NDRRF.

7.1.3 Gaps identified

Several gaps in the guidance provided by the Handbook Collection have been identified through this review process. Areas of practice and policy guidance that could be covered by new, revised or adapted handbooks or companion guides include:

- community-based risk reduction
- household, business and organizational preparedness messaging
- data based decision making, strategic foresight, impact and needs assessments.
- financing DRR
- governance for DRR
- economic, built, and natural environment resilience
- understanding urban resilience, and remote and rural resilience.

A focus on these topics would contribute to the Second NAP. Gaps in the ADPF identified included specific content on public order and community safety, logistics and supply chain management, impact assessment, search and rescue, biosecurity, fatality management, responder protection and sustainment, and intelligence and situational awareness. Some of these topics sit outside of AIDRs remit and may be covered by doctrine or guidance from other organisations.

Recommendation:

- That a program of work is developed by the AIDR Knowledge Development team scoping potential topics for handbooks and companions, based on the gaps in guidance identified in the mapping of handbooks against disaster management frameworks.

7.2 Framing the handbooks

The review of the literature indicates that, particularly in the defence domain, doctrine is often organised into a hierarchy. AFAC doctrine also follow this hierarchical framework approach. This helps the user understand where they need to begin when using guidelines/doctrine. A framework also helps with maintenance and review, as practical guidance is more likely to need frequent updating than conceptual guidance, as practice tends to evolve faster than concepts.

The handbooks to date have been a collection without any organisation, hierarchy or overarching Framework. This is largely because, as noted above, they were created at a time when there were no strategic national disaster management frameworks, and their development responded to ad hoc needs. The handbooks do reference each other and work well as a collection.

The review of the literature suggests that there are base or foundational levels of guidance that do not change significantly over time, unless there is a dramatic policy or practice shift.[24] Then there is a more practical or procedural level of guidance, which is updated on a regular basis as processes change based on research, lived experience or practice. The current handbooks are a mix of strategic, conceptual guidance (e.g. *Systemic Disaster Risk*), practical how-to manuals (e.g. *Lessons Management* or *Managing Exercises*) and principles-based guidance (*DRE for Young People*). Some, such as the *Community Recovery* Handbook, span all these categories.

Based on the above findings of the review process, we propose a framework for the handbook collection. This framework is cascading and draws upon NHRA's grouping of research themes:

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[24] British Army (2011) *Army Doctrine Primer*

Foundational, Functional and Driving Change. **Foundational Level** are the foundations that underpin DRR and disaster resilience and will inform and enhance remaining themes. **Functional Level** draw upon the foundational themes and extend the practice into specific issues and needs. **Driving Change Level** are crosscutting topics that aim to inform organisational and system wide change.[25]
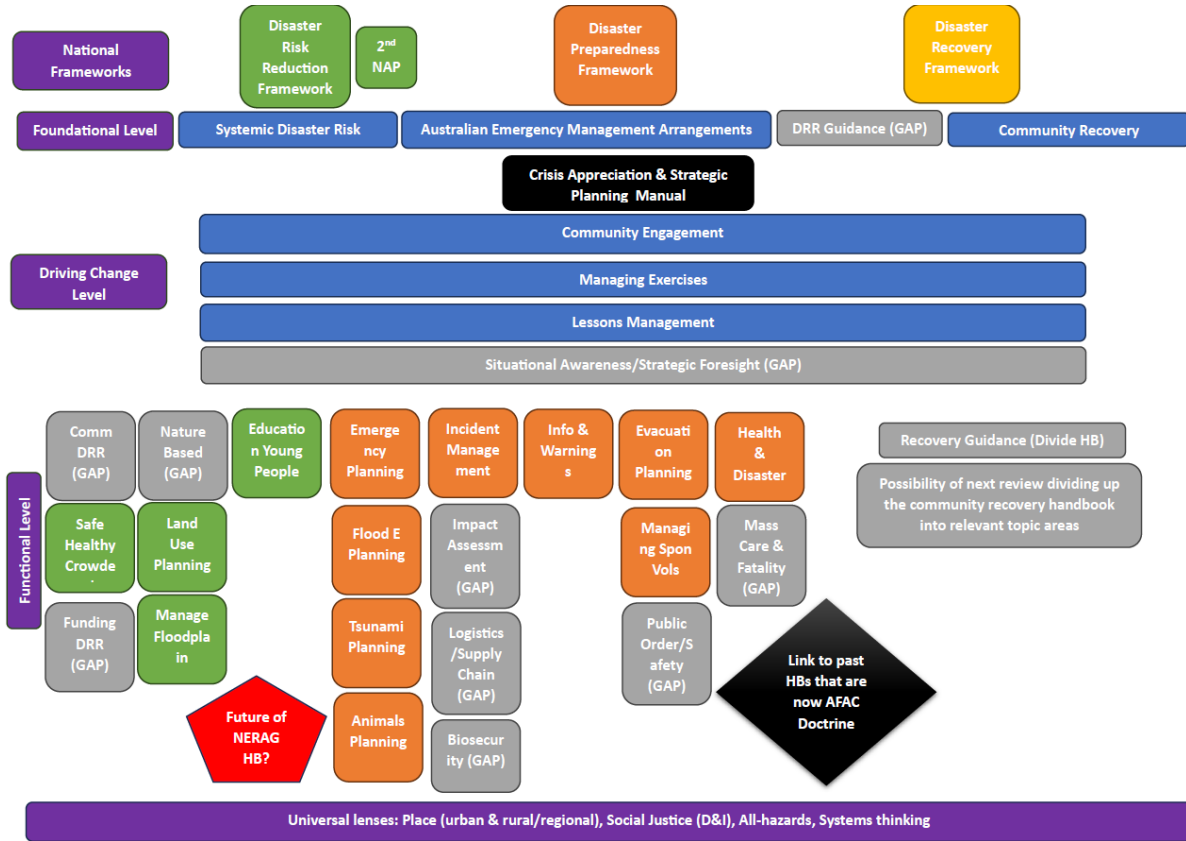

Figure 1 Proposed Handbook Collection Framework

At a **foundational level,** the *Australian Emergency Management Arrangements* (AEMA), *Systemic Disaster Risk* and *Community Recovery* handbooks provide a fundamental understanding of key principles, concepts and arrangements. Understanding systemic disaster risk is a key focus of the Sendai Framework and the NDRFF. Given the emerging understanding of systemic disaster risk as a cornerstone of DRR, the *Systemic Disaster Risk* handbook should be considered as one of the foundational handbooks to enable a basis for how functional topics are considered systemically rather than in isolation. The current *AEMA* handbook, while very general in nature, does detail the principles of EM in Australia. An enhanced *AEMA* handbook would see it become a foundational document. The *Community Recovery* handbook provides a fundamental understand of recovery principles and concepts. The current *Community Recovery* handbook is quite large and could be split to enable the first part to become a stand-alone foundational document, and the latter part focus on practice.

It was observed that there is an absence of a fundamental level understanding of DRR and resilience as well as response, within the current collection although it is possible that the *Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning Guidebook* provides some guidance in this area. To address this gap, we recommend that foundational level guidance on DRR and resilience should be developed. A discussion should be conducted with NEMA's EMR Division and/or AFAC Council on response guidance.

Recommendations:

- A framework for the handbooks is adopted that structures the handbooks into foundational, functional, and driving change purposes.
- That new foundational content on DRR, resilience and recovery is developed to conceptually underpin the functional handbooks. Foundations of response could also be considered, in conjunction with AFAC and NEMA's EMR Division.

7.3 Guiding the Handbooks Collection

The AIDR Knowledge Development team's program of work, which includes the cyclical review of handbooks and scoping and development of new topics, is authorised by the AIDR Governance Committee. AIDR currently does not have a technical advisory committee to provide guidance on a program of work for the Knowledge Development team. The establishment of a technical advisory committee would be valuable to guide the future direction and content of the Handbooks Collection.

While the Knowledge Development team engages with the AFAC Collaboration Group KIRUN, there are many other stakeholders in the DRR system that would also be valuable to engage with. This was seen in the response to the survey which showed broad engagement and utilisation of the handbooks from a wide range of stakeholders. The expertise, experience and project outcomes generated from local governments, state/territory EM policy teams, ambulance and health services, universities, not-for-profit, community sector and business sector all need to be considered to enhance how knowledge can be developed and utilised for the handbooks.

Finally, the Handbook Collection could be more strongly linked to the broader EM/DRR policy environment, which is governed by ANZEMC.

Recommendations:

- That stronger connections to the DRR/EM policy arrangements be developed to ensure that the handbooks are informed by policy developments.
- That a mechanism such as a technical advisory group be established to enable high-level best practice, technical advice to inform the knowledge development program of work.

7.4 Structuring the handbooks

The structure of the handbooks in the Handbook Collection varies to a degree from handbook to handbook. Consistency of structure, content and tone across the handbooks is important to ensure that they work as a collection while avoiding duplication. To ensure this, the guidance for handbook writers should be updated and made clearer, ensuring that it includes model content and structure.

The opening chapter should reflect consistent contextual content relating to:

- disaster risk and consequence
- policy frameworks
- purpose
- key concepts
- audience
- scope.

Each handbook should also identify how it contributes to the various disaster management frameworks, and any other relevant policy documents. Based on our meetings with key organisations, this is in line with practice undertaken in the European Union (alignment with the EU's 5 resilience goals), the US (FEMA's guidance aligning with the National Preparedness Goal), and UNDRR (alignment with the Sendai Framework).

The handbooks should also include considerations of intersectionality and draw upon systemic disaster risk principles and the Australian EM Principles. This aligns with the NAP2 National Action 9: incorporate a range of community values into decision-making processes that acknowledge the broader benefits achievable through inclusive DRR.

Recommendation:

- That a consistent structure be adopted for the handbooks that reflects contemporary EM and DRR principles (including systemic risk, citizen centric, inclusive of diverse voices).

7.5 Producing the handbooks

The development, review and maintenance of the Handbook Collection is detailed in the *Handbook Collection Management Policy* available on the Knowledge Hub. The handbooks are currently produced following a consensus approach of an expert working group. Membership of this working group is typically comprised of experienced practitioners, policy makers and researchers who submit expressions of interest in participating or are specifically sought out for their expertise. This approach is in line with processes used by DG ECHO, UNDRR and FEMA.

Further consideration should be given to the systematic inclusion of diverse sectors and voices in handbook working groups. This would ensure greater alignment with the NAP Outcome 8 that: *Disaster management arrangements are inclusive, networked and aligned, supported by meaningful partnerships.* This would also strengthen AIDRs contribution to the Emergency Management Targeted Action Plan that '*NEMA will work with the AIDR to ensure new, and reviewed publications developed for the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection reflect the needs of people with disability and the importance of inclusive practices*.' This could potentially be facilitated through representation within the working groups, or reviews of drafts by an expert advisory group. As noted above, AIDR currently does not have an expert technical advisory group, and we recommend this should be considered going forward.

In order to align with good practice, it is important to ensure the principles are grounded in evidence - where evidence is available. The handbooks also should reflect the most current peer-reviewed research. Each review cycle should incorporate a literature review of peer reviewed and an environmental scan of grey literature to ensure that the best available current evidence is being used.

Currently, the handbook development process does not have a public review process. FEMA, UNDRR, and Public Safety Canada make their policy or guidance documents publicly available for comment, for a 4–6-week period. This should be considered in the handbooks process, noting that it builds in additional work and costs, and lengthens the time needed to complete a handbook. Undertaking a

public review process would strengthen the process of handbook development, improving transparency and rigor.

The EM sector has several established methods of reviewing and improving practice. This includes monitoring and evaluation processes, after action reviews, lessons management processes, and formal statutory, judicial or parliamentary inquiries. These represent a rich source of knowledge that should inform the continuous improvement of the handbooks. Currently, there is no formal process outlined in the handbook management policy for assessing review findings against the principles and strategies detailed in the handbooks and making updates. Undertaking a feedback loop process would strengthen the content of the handbooks. It is recommended that it is explored how this can be undertaken in a systematic way.

As outlined in the handbook management policy, each handbook is to be reviewed on a 5-year cycle. This is in line with good practice. The DG ECHO review their content approximately every 10 years and FEMA every 5 years.

Recommendations:

- That the consensus approach to develop handbooks continue and is strengthened by the systematic inclusion of diverse voices.
- That a period of public consultation/comment is scheduled into the handbook process to strengthen the content of the handbooks.
- That a formal process for the incorporation of lessons management processes, inquiries and peer reviewed research, and other insights is developed and added to the handbook management policy to ensure that the handbooks maintain currency.

7.6 Implementing the handbooks

Once the handbooks are produced, there is usually an online showcase involving the writer and contributors. These showcases are usually well attended; but this is generally the extent of the promotion of the handbooks by AIDR. Despite the limited promotion of the handbooks, it is clear from the stakeholder survey that the handbooks are accessed and well used in a range of settings. This based on the numbers of handbook downloads, as well as feedback collected via the annual stakeholder survey and the survey conducted as part of this review.

In the 2022-2023 financial year, the handbooks were downloaded 19,085 times. 77% of the respondents to the AIDR annual stakeholder survey for 2023 indicated that they had used the handbooks, with a further 19% being aware of them but not having used them.[26] The handbooks are used in a range of ways, including for team training and deployments, for information sessions with community groups, as good reference reading materials, exercising response plans, for advanced studies and basis for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. A detailed overview of the results of the handbook survey can be found in Appendix 1, however some of the feedback included:

- "I access this weekly to support work that I am doing in my current role."
- "The Handbooks underpin policy and practice for State Governments."

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[26] AIDR (2024) Annual Stakeholder survey

- "These have been great as a reference to check that policy and procedure that we are developing is in line with current best practice and so that we can ensure we are consistent."
- "I regularly use the Handbook collection in my day-to-day work of strategic planning for storm and flood."
- "Primarily for funding reasons - to determine whether grant proposals align with recognised concepts and definitions."
- "We regularly use the Community Recovery Handbook as well as Emergency Planning, Lessons Management and Exercising Toolkit."

In addition, the handbooks are referenced in a range of policy documents and other fora. The recent Productivity Commission Report into Government Services, Emergency Management Performance refers to both the *AEMA* and *Managing the Floodplain* handbooks. The Royal Commission into the National Natural Disasters referred to the *Emergency Planning*, *Evacuation Planning* and *Community Recovery* handbooks 10 times in the final report.[27] Both the State of Victoria and Queensland[28] draw upon the *Lessons Management* handbook to inform their Lessons Management Frameworks. The Queensland IGEM used the *Public Information and Warnings* handbook Guideline 1 as a reference for the Southeast Queensland Rainfall and Flooding February to March 2022 Review.

Two international organisations offer certifications for EM practitioners within Australasia. The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is a US based organisation that works closely with FEMA. IAEM offers the Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) and Associate Emergency Manager (AEM) certification. CEM/AEM is required as a pre-entry requirement for many FEMA jobs. The International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS) is European based and offers its own EM certifications - The Total Qualification Certification (TQC) and Total Qualification Associate Certification (TQAC). Both certifications adhere to the principles of professionalisation in that they require evidence of education, experience in the field of EM, contribution to the profession and completion of an examination.

Both certifying organizations (IAEM and TIEMS) have prepared examinations that include international EM concepts and principles as well as appropriate regional content. All content must be open source and recognized as industry standard for the region. Regional content for Australian participants in the examination process for both IAEM and TIEMS use the Handbook Collection as the source for the Australian questions. Each examination has been updated within the last two years to the current handbooks.[29]

The Public Safety Training Package provides the vocational units of competency that underpin many of the training products delivered to EM staff and volunteers across Australia. The public safety training package has been recently updated with reviews of existing EM units and the addition of recovery units. Each of those units requires the preparation of Companion Volume Implementation Guides that support the delivery of training by registered training organizations. All the recently

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[27] Commonwealth of Australia (2020) *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report*
[28] State of Queensland (2020) *Queensland Disaster Management Lesson Management Framework*
[29] Dippy, R (2020) *Professionalism: Certification for emergency management leaders* Australian Journal of Emergency Management

updated units refer to the Handbooks Collection as the source of best practice Australian arrangements to be delivered in the respective training session.

Additionally, the AFAC Jurisdictional Emergency Management Education Network has mapped in a minor or major way the handbooks inform jurisdictional training programs. All jurisdictions except for Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia use the handbook or companion guides in some way to inform training.

Limited capacity and resourcing at AIDR prevent further development of a capability program to support the implementation of the handbooks within the sector, although this has been something that has been suggested through different fora and feedback. As part of the work of the AIDR of the future, there we recommend the development of a capability program that assists with the implementation of handbooks into practice across the system.

Recommendation:

- That a capability development program is explored by AIDR to further assist with the implementation of the handbooks through embedding in practice.

8. Recommendations

1. Develop a DRR Guidance Development practice paper for publication in the Australian Journal of Emergency Management.
2. Explore the further development of handbook working groups into topic specific communities of practice.
3. That a program of work is developed by the AIDR Knowledge Development team scoping potential topics for handbooks and companions, based on the gaps in guidance identified in the mapping of handbooks against disaster management frameworks.
4. A framework for the handbooks is adopted that structures the handbooks into foundational, functional, and driving change purposes.
5. That new foundational content on DRR and resilience, and recovery is developed to conceptually underpin the functional handbooks. Foundations of response could also be considered, in conjunction with AFAC and NEMA's EMR Division.
6. That stronger connections to the DRR/EM policy arrangements be developed to ensure that the handbooks are informed by policy developments.
7. That a mechanism be developed to enable high-level best practice, technical advice to inform the knowledge development program of work.
8. That a consistent structure be adopted for the handbooks that reflects contemporary EM and DRR principles.
9. That the consensus approach to using working groups to develop handbooks continue and is strengthened by the systematic inclusion of diverse voices
10. That a period of public consultation/comment is scheduled into the handbook process to strengthen the content of the handbooks.
11. That a process for the incorporation of lessons management processes, inquiries and peer reviewed research, and other insights is developed to ensure that the handbooks maintain currency.
12. That a capability development program is explored by AIDR to further assist with the implementation of the handbooks through embedding in practice.

# Appendix 1: Survey results

Survey Design and Method

- The survey consisted of 10 questions and was delivered via *Survey Monkey* available to the public from May to September 2023. There were 137 valid responses received.
- Questions were designed to develop an understanding of the current use of the Handbooks in the Collection, the extent to which they are shared amongst Handbook user's networks, and the strengths and gaps evident in the current collection.
- Questions about the respondent's role(s) and broad geographic location allowed for an understanding of the range of sectors utilising the handbooks.
- The questions were predominantly open-ended to allow respondents to provide answers that the team may not have considered. This avoided limiting respondents to a pre-defined set of answers.

Results

Question 1

- Question 1 asked respondents to select which of the Handbooks in the Collection they had used.

Q1 Which of the following Handbooks have you used? (Please select all that apply)
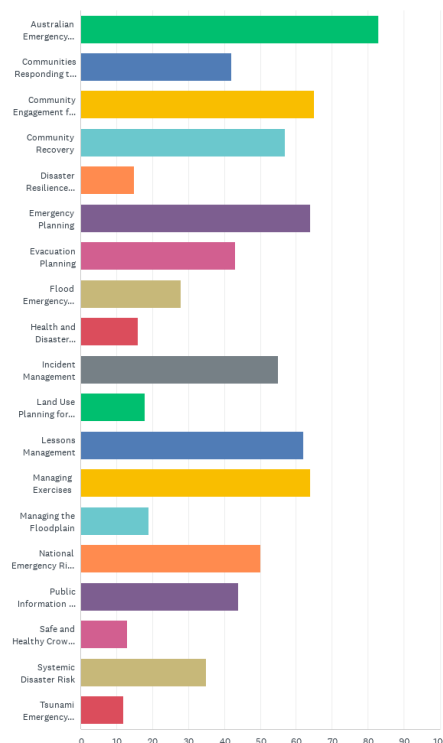
- The majority of respondents had used more than one Handbook.

Question 2

- Question 2 was an open-ended question that asked respondents to describe how they have used the Handbook(s) they selected in question 1.
- Respondents reported utilising the Handbooks in a variety of ways including:
  - As course material for several Australian University undergraduate and masters subjects, in addition to diplomas, graduate certificates, and professional certifications.
  - As reference material for current and new job roles.
  - As reference material in presentations.
  - As reference material to communicate terms and complex topics to stakeholders and community.
  - As recommended reading material for new recruits in various roles.
  - As material for developing and delivering training, workshops, and exercises.
  - As a formal research resource and self-directed education resource – particularly when other training or support is not available.
  - To compare local policy and ANZPAA procedure.
  - To develop local community resilience programs.
  - To develop and review policies, procedures, plans, sub-plans, and strategies in organisations, and local and state government.
  - To inform recommendations or public policy asks in government submissions.
  - To inform internal and external risk assessments at state, regional and local government levels.
  - To inform the development of EM arrangements in biosecurity and agriculture department.
  - As reference material in the development of/feedback on international standards.
  - To ensure organisational/department alignment with good practice.
  - As an advocacy tool on how to 'do' disasters differently.

Question 3

- Question 3 was an open-ended question that asked respondents to describe what features of the Handbook(s) they found most useful.
- The top 5 most cited features that respondents found useful were the principles (N = 43), the structure (N = 24), the simple and consistent use of language (N = 21), the additional materials (N =14) and the inclusion of diagrams (N =9).
- Based on the responses, these features appear to contribute to making the handbooks clear, accessible, and practical for a wide range of users.

Question 4

- Question 4 asked respondents whether they had used any of the companion documents or Quick Guides associated with the Handbooks.
- Most respondents (74) had **not** used the companion documents or Quick Guides, and/or were unaware of them.
- 57 respondents had used the companion documents or Quick Guides, however often for only specific Handbook(s) of interest or relevance to the respondents' work.

- There also appeared to be some confusion about what materials were Handbook companion documents or Quick Guides, with some respondents citing they had used the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience and other National policy frameworks.
- These responses suggest that more needs to be done to promote these resources, as short summaries of the Handbooks are often requested by stakeholders.

Question 5

- Question 5 asked respondents whether they had identified any gaps in the Handbook Collection.
- 34 respondents did **not** identify any gaps and **25** respondents did not provide a response or stated they were unsure.
- 78 respondents provided thoughts or suggestions though not all were specific to the Handbooks Collection. In addition, not all suggestions are within the scope of the Handbooks Collection. Similarly, some of the gaps that were identified are due to some of the old manuals being superseded by doctrine from other organisations e.g. some are now part of AFAC Doctrine. This highlights a need to show where other doctrine/guidance can be found.
- Gaps identified included:
    - Crisis Management Handbook that links industry to government through situational awareness and a common operating picture.
    - Financing for DRR, recovery and community-led resilience.
    - Adaptation and transformative DRR processes/practices.
    - Household resilience measures.
    - Managed/planned retreat.
    - Operational planning methodology for EM.
    - Broadening to have Handbooks on bushfire, coastal hazards, earthquake, cyclone/storm, heatwaves, radiological and nuclear preparedness and response (all-hazards).
    - Handbooks targeted towards community members.
    - Training to support Handbooks content.
    - Greater evidence showing integration of current research.
    - DRR for youth outside formal school settings.
    - Legal aspects.
    - Psychological preparedness, mental health.
    - Guidance on working across sectors/community domains/formal systems.
    - Recruiting and retaining volunteers and managing volunteers.
    - Guidance on conducting risk assessments and risk management for cascading and concurrent events, incorporating climate change.
    - Basic contingency planning templates and guidance on maximum tolerable period disruption.
    - Need to incorporate environmental/cultural issues into EM.
    - First Nations knowledge.
    - Disaster impact evaluation.
    - Debriefing.
    - Diversity and inclusion considerations need to be across all the Handbooks.
    - Multi-agency and multi-party leadership and collaboration.
    - Handbook on the AWS.

  o Critical infrastructure resilience.

  o DRR and EM in tourist destinations/highly mobile and dynamic places.

Question 6

- Question 6 asked respondents whether they had shared and of the Handbooks with others.
- 109 of the respondents had shared the handbooks with others. For those that gave specific examples of who they shared the handbooks with, respondents stated one or multiple people or groups, including colleagues/staff/team (N = 87), clients (N = 10), students (N = 17), and friends (N = 6) both within Australia and internationally (e.g., US, Canada, UK, and NZ).
- Overall, the majority of respondents have actively shared the Handbooks to enhance disaster resilience and preparedness.
- These responses highlight that handbooks are valued by those using them, and the handbooks play an important role in collaboration, education, and dissemination of disaster resilience information across a range of audiences.
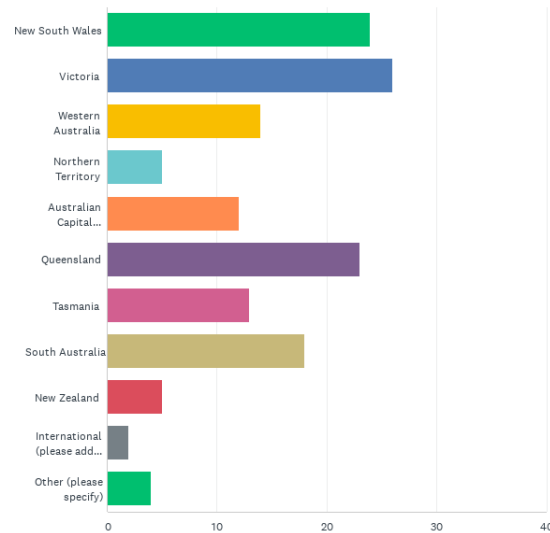
Question 7

- Question 7 allowed respondent's multiple responses to allow for respondents who may work across multiple sectors or have multiple roles (e.g. paid and volunteer roles)
- The top two responses were 'state government' and 'emergency management'. This aligns with the current target audience of the Handbooks which is aimed at practitioners working in the disaster space.
- Of interest was the diversity of other sectors that are utilising the handbook collection. While these numbers were only small, it highlights the ways the handbooks are being utilised by sectors beyond 'traditional' emergency management. As disasters affect all sectors of society, it is essential to improve engagement with and information dissemination to these diverse sectors.

Question 8

- Question 8 asked participants to describe their role, if they were comfortable doing so.
- This question elicited a variety of responses that showed the handbooks being utilised by students, early career personnel, researchers, as well as varying levels of senior roles and senior management.
- To ensure confidentiality the specific roles won't be listed in this report.

Question 9

Q9 Where are you located?

- Question 9 asked respondents where they were primarily located.

Question 10

- Question 10 asked respondents whether they had any further comments or reflections.
- Positive Feedback: Many respondents expressed their appreciation for the handbooks, recognizing them as valuable resources for emergency management.
- Promotion and Visibility: Some respondents suggested that the handbooks could benefit from increased promotion and visibility, especially at the local government level.
- Target Audience: There were comments regarding the need to consider a wider range of potential users, including those who may not have an extensive background in emergency management.
- Community-Centric Approach: A few respondents mentioned the importance of a more community-centric approach in the handbooks, reflecting changes in the philosophy of emergency management.
- Inclusivity: There were suggestions to include a broader range of contributors, including academic and non-aligned industry representatives, to enrich the working group discussions.
- Content Updates: There was a call for content updates to include topics like mental health, sustainability, climate change adaptation, and aligning with new strategic frameworks and policies.
- Cross-Country Compatibility: A few respondents raised the idea of making the handbooks compatible with New Zealand and the importance of facilitating cross-country use.