

NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF CATASTROPHIC DISASTERS

Statement by Minister for Police and Emergency Services

MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [2.08 pm]: In recent times, devastating events such as the Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquakes in Pakistan and hurricane Katrina have highlighted the need for well-organised responses at a national level. Accordingly, Western Australia is supporting the development of a national emergency plan for the management of catastrophic disasters. In the unlikely event they were to occur, such disasters would, by definition, be beyond the management capacity of any single state or territory.

At the 7 April meeting of the Augmented Australasian Police Ministers' Council, the federal Attorney-General, state and territory emergency services ministers and a representative of the Australian Local Government Association agreed that the national emergency management plan (catastrophic disasters) would include provision of fundamental necessities such as food, shelter, medical and financial services to the Australian community. This plan, which is being prepared by the Australian Emergency Management Committee, will support the national emergency protocol as adopted by the Council of Australian Governments on 10 February 2006. The national emergency protocol notes that national emergency arrangements are well developed and coordinated and have the capacity to manage any substantial emergencies. In the unlikely event of an emergency of greater magnitude, the protocol seeks to ensure effective coordination and communication arrangements between the Prime Minister, first ministers and the president of the Australian Local Government Association during a national emergency. The AAPMC also considered and endorsed the report on the "Review of Australia's Ability to Respond and Recover from Catastrophic Disasters" that commenced in 2004 following a recommendation from COAG in its report "Natural Disasters in Australia; Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements".