



AUSTRALIAN CIVIL-MILITARY CENTRE

**RECURRING ISSUES FROM AUSTRALIAN
CIVIL-MILITARY RESPONSES 1997 - 2022**

TECHNICAL REPORT

DATE: 15 SEPTEMBER 2024

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Recurring Issues from Australian Civil-Military Responses 1977 – 2022 report (The Report) involved conducting a meta-analysis of the findings in documentation that addresses Australian civil-military responses to domestic and international crises from 1997-2022. The 26-year period in question of 1997-2022 was chosen because it captures some of Australia’s major overseas contributions as part of Timor-Leste’s transition to independence from Indonesia, to deployments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Solomon Islands, plus humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) activities in the Pacific. The analysis includes contemporary domestic crisis responses using ADF support such as bushfires, flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The Report was implemented through a lessons management process and drew on the Australian Disaster Resilience Lessons Management Handbook which comprises four stages namely Collection, Analysis, Implementation, and Monitoring and Review¹. Phase 1 of this Project involved the Collection and Analysis stages.

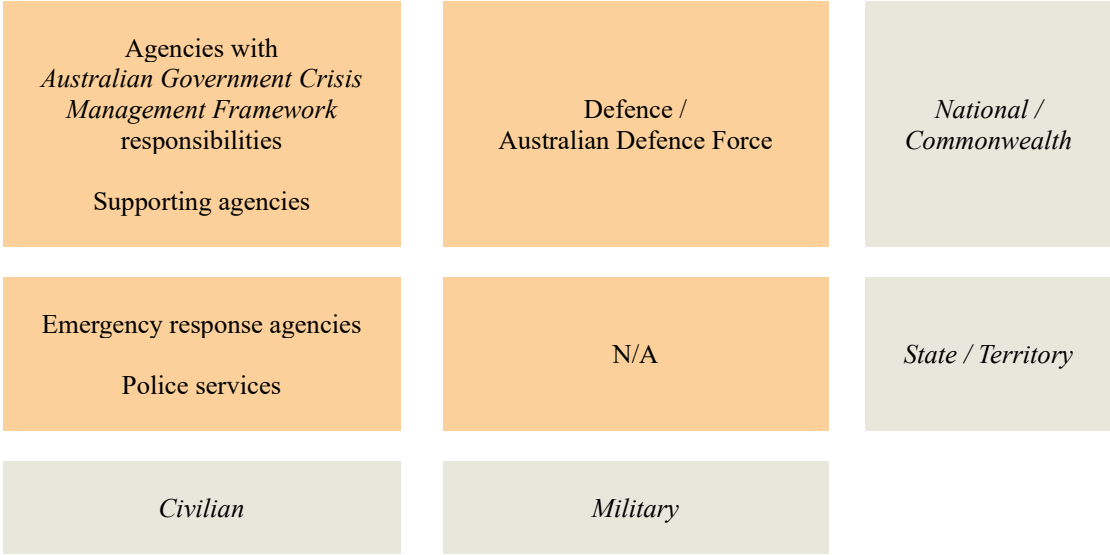
COLLECTION

3. The Report gathered observations from activities, submissions, reports, or other debriefing artefacts. This included debriefing artefacts such as after-action reports, post-activity reports, or other kinds of reflective materials.
4. **Focus areas.** The Project sought to be inclusive of relevant documentation rather than exclusive based on technicalities. The following issue areas were broadly targeted:
 - a. **Domestic** activities under Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) and Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authorities (DFACA), which provide the means through which the ADF can assist jurisdictions during emergencies
 - b. **International** activities such as Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) - led humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
 - c. **Non-combatant evacuation operations** (NEO) that involve military-assistance
 - d. **Operations** that are formally designated, including counter-terrorism operations
 - e. **Major event security** for high profile Australian Government-hosted events
 - f. **Major joint exercises** that practice planning, conducting military operations, and improve combat readiness and interoperability in civil-military contexts

¹ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, 2019 *Lessons Management*, 2nd ed. Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection.

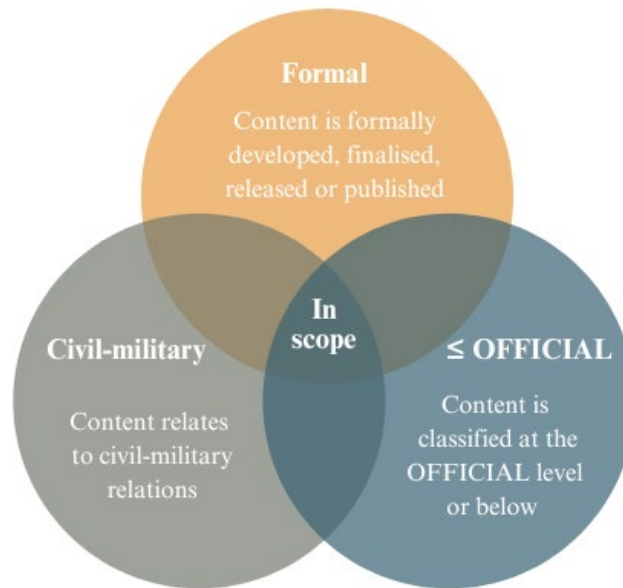
- g. **Any other activity** that takes the form of one of the above categories, even if not specifically defined as such.
5. **Timespan.** The Project sought to collect information from the 1997-2022 timeframe with the view to capture crisis response activities from Australia’s response to Timor-Leste’s transition to independence through to the response to COVID-19 pandemic.
6. **Stakeholders.** As shown in Figure 5, civilian and military agencies with responsibilities at the state and territory and/or national level for crisis response assisted to source debriefing material. Responsibilities of agencies are detailed within the *Australian Government Crisis Management Framework* (AGCMF). International organisations, academia, industry, non-governmental organisations and other government departments were also approached to capture a range of information.

Figure 1 – Conceptual segmentation of target audiences



7. **Code files.** A repository of documentation from stakeholders and their metadata was entered into a database. This included basic information as though a catalogue entry, such as author, date, title. Each file was also given a standardised filename in the database to enable future queries.
8. **Scope review.** Collected files were reviewed for inclusion against the Project’s scope, as illustrated in Figure 6. Files were primarily excluded from the analysis due to not being relevant to the civil-military nexus.

Figure 2 – Scope review of collected files



ANALYSIS

9. Analysis for the Report involved reviewing the collected data to identify trends or themes based on factual information. The OILL process of Observation, Insight, Lesson identified and Lesson learned was fundamental to this. This Project progressed the synthesis of the collected data through the Observation and Insight stages only. Additional phases are required to develop this Report’s findings into lessons and enable civilian and military organisations to learn them via change management.

10. **Extracting observations.** The files collected spanned a variety of formats, some as bulk or raw observations, and many that were already synthesised into a published or mature written format. As such, information extracted included observations from post activity reports (and files of a comparable nature), report recommendations, as well as existing insights and identified lessons. A small number of unsynthesised observations were drawn from the Defence Lessons Repository. While this departed somewhat from a standard OILL approach, it was offset by the large amount of information extracted. Large *n* studies provide statistical significance to the available data and underpin identified themes with evidence. In other words, important issue areas were identifiable due to the large number of observations.

11. **Coding observations.** The extracted observations were coded so as to enable filtering and analysis based on the following categories:

- a. **Author type.** Whether the observation was from a civilian or military perspective.
- b. **Crisis response type.** Whether the observation related to a domestic or international crisis response activity. A small number of files collected related to both response types and as such judgement was used to apply the most relevant code.
- c. **National themes.** An existing two-tier library of codes relevant to crisis response lessons management was used and these are shown in Table 1. These were drawn from the *Australian Disaster Resilience Lessons Management Handbook* and

required minor adjustment to reflect the Project’s needs. Observations were coded to national themes using a *one-to-many* approach. In this Project, each observation could be associated with up to two national themes and associated sub-themes. The connection multiplicity that doing so generated allowed more nuance to be brought out in the identified observations than a *one-to-one* approach.

Table 1 – National themes and sub-themes

National theme	National sub-theme
Operations	Interoperability
	Situational awareness
	Intelligence
	Agency-specific issues
People	Relationships
	Human factors
	Culture
Communication	Public information
	Media
	Internal communication
Governance	Policy
	Process SOI/SOG/SOP
	Risk
	Terminology
	Legal
	Organisational structure
	Doctrine
	Accountability
	Standards
	Safety
	Management
	Reporting
	Strategic plan (<i>new sub-theme</i>)
Command, control and coordination	Operational planning
	Leadership
	Decision making
	Incident management
Communities	Engagement
	Preparedness
	Resilience
	Recovery
	Expectations
Capability development	Training and development
	Exercising
	Evaluation
	Simulation
	Research (experimentation, exploration)

	Lessons management
	Knowledge management
National theme (cont.)	National sub-theme (cont.)
Resources	Equipment
	Capacity
	Technology
	Facilities
	Finance
	People
	Engagement
	Preparedness
	Resilience
	Recovery
	Expectations
	Communities

12. **Deidentification.** The intent of the Project was to foster inclusive and constructive feedback to improve civil-military interactions during crisis responses. To effect this ‘no-blame’ perspective, each observation was assigned a unique tag in the format of "1234-ABCD". The first numerical part of the tag refers to the file that the observation was drawn from. The second alphanumeric part of the tag is the observation reference. Both elements of the tags were randomly generated and assigned.

13. In combination, this approach deidentifies references to the observations while also providing an evidence trail for verifying insights. It also means that the researcher can ensure that insights are developed from multiple sources as per the OILL process (whereby three observations from preferably different sources can be used to develop an insight).

14. **Weighting and bias.** Not all observations or themes are created equal however the ability to identify relative and perceived difference between source, observations and themes is limited by the time and resources available for this Project. This Project took the approach that all observations are equal while also recognising that further work can be done in this area for greater clarification. Additionally, the allocation of observation to theme is inherently biased by the researcher or analyst. This Project used one principle analyst and a second analyst was used to randomly verify the allocations.

15. **Insights.** Once coded, similar observations were grouped in order to inform the development of insights. Insights are deductions based on observations, ideally three similarly themed ones drawn from multiple sources. Single high-risk observations may be considered as an insight in their own rights, though none were identified during Phase 1 of the Project.

DATA

COLLECTED FILES

Table 2 – Collected files by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Number	71	111	182
Percentage	39%	61%	100%

Table 3 – Collected files by year of publication and author type*

Year	Civilian	Military	Total
2001	0	1	1
2002	0	1	1
2003	0	1	1
2004	1	0	1
2005	2	2	4
2006	7	1	8
2007	1	0	1
2008	1	0	1
2009	1	0	1
2010	1	1	2
2011	0	1	1
2012	1	6	7
2013	3	4	7
2014	3	8	11
2015	4	14	18
2016	7	16	23
2017	4	3	7
2018	4	6	10
2019	1	1	2
2020	12	18	30
2021	4	12	16
2022	3	5	8
2023	8	9	17
2024*	3	1	4
Total	71	111	182

**Some data was provided as summaries of agencies' in-scope internal documentation and as such did not have dates allocated to specific line items.*

Table 4 – Collected files by file type

	PDF	Document	Slide	Email	Spreadsheet	Total
Number	112	46	14	9	1	182
Percentage*	62%	25%	8%	5%	1%	100%

** Percentage may not total 100 due to rounding*

OBSERVATIONS

Table 5 – Observations by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total observations
Number	444	792	1236
Percentage	36%	64%	100%

Table 6 – Observations by crisis response focus

	Civilian	Military	Total observations
Domestic response	192	375	567
International response	252	417	669
Total observations	444	792	1236

CODED OBSERVATIONS

Table 7 – Coded observations: National theme by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Operations	15	50	65
People	23	42	65
Communication	81	140	221
Governance	198	357	555
Command, control and coordination	104	182	286
Communities	29	23	52
Capability development	29	93	122
Resources	103	180	283
Total coded observations	582	1067	1649

Table 8 – Observations coded to Operations sub-themes by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Interoperability	12	24	36
Situational awareness	1	12	13
Intelligence	2	14	16
Total coded to Operations	15	50	65

Table 9 – Observations coded to People sub-themes by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Relationships	11	29	40
Human factors	6	6	12
Culture	6	7	13

Total coded to People	23	42	65
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Table 10 – Observations coded to Communication sub-themes by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Public information	16	14	30
Media	11	21	32
Internal communication	54	105	159
Total coded to Communication	81	140	221

Table 11 – Observations coded to Governance sub-themes by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Policy	4	28	32
Terminology	1	9	10
Doctrine	1	3	4
Process/SOI/SOG/SOP	28	62	90
Legal	24	46	70
Accountability	18	18	36
Risk	8	6	14
Organisational structure	34	71	105
Safety	4	12	16
Standards	2	3	5
Management	28	45	73
Reporting	15	12	27
Strategic plan	31	42	73
Total coded to Governance	198	357	555

Table 12 – Observations coded to Command, control and coordination sub-themes by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Operational planning	23	81	104
Leadership	15	27	42
Decision making	10	14	24
Incident management	56	60	116
Total coded to Command, control and coordination	104	182	286

Table 13 – Observations coded to Communities sub-themes by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Engagement	18	15	33
Preparedness	2	0	2
Resilience	1	0	1

Recovery	6	1	7
Expectations	2	7	9
Total coded to Communities	29	23	52

Table 14 – Observations coded to Capability development sub-themes by author type

	Civilian	Military	Total
Training and development	10	24	34
Exercising	11	51	62
Lessons management	5	12	17
Knowledge management	3	6	9
Total coded to Capability development	29	93	122

Table 15 – Observations coded to Resources sub-themes by author type

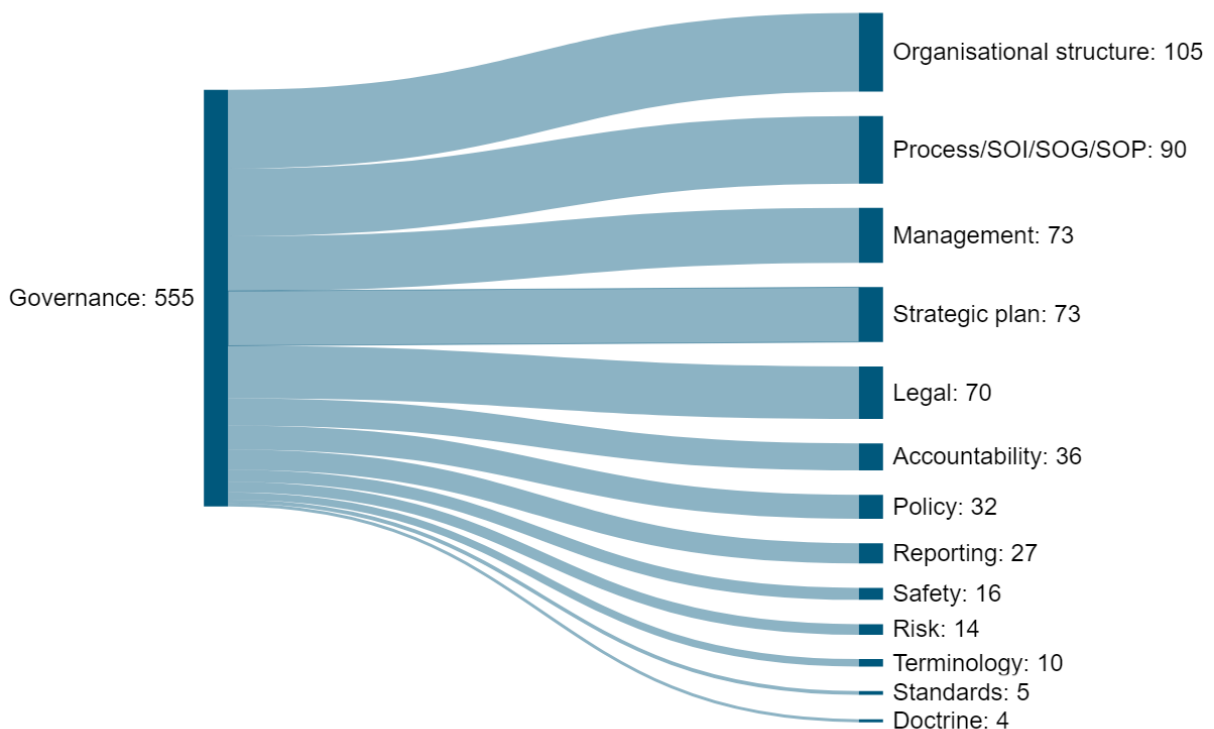
	Civilian	Military	Total
Equipment	8	6	14
Technology	8	34	42
Finance	7	2	9
Capacity	18	22	40
Facilities	16	18	34
People	44	97	141
Preparedness	1	1	2
Expectations	1	0	1
Total coded to Resources	103	180	283

INSIGHTS

GOVERNANCE

1. Observations primarily coded as Governance were broken into the following sub-themes: Organisational structure, Process/SOI/SOG/SOP, Management, Strategic plan, Legal, Accountability, Policy, Reporting, Safety, Risk, Terminology, Standards, Doctrine.
2. Minor modifications were made to the *Lessons Management Handbook* sub-themes so that the nature of the collected data was better reflected. An additional sub-theme of Strategic plan was added to be distinguished from Policy matters.
3. Meaningful insights could not be generated from the sub-themes of Risk, Standards, and Doctrine because there was insufficient commonality among the coded observations. It is proposed that these coded observations could be reconsidered at a future stage with a view to add value to other insights.
4. The Governance theme attracted over one-third of all observations. Despite having the most sub-themes, the weight of observations indicates the high relative value of this theme to the stakeholders. The common message throughout this theme is the lack of information literacy among collaborating agencies. That is, there is a strong need for greater cross-pollination and awareness of partner roles, responsibilities, capabilities and processes.

Figure 3 – Observations coded to Governance theme



5. **Organisational structure.** Civilian and military agencies need to better understand each other (40 observations). There was a strong indication of a lack of understanding of each others' roles, responsibilities, capabilities, approaches to security, planning, decision making, reporting, resources, culture, ways of working and limitations.

6. The ADF can integrate well into existing structures (3 observations), though greater understanding of its capabilities other than 'boots on the ground' would be beneficial (5 observations). There is also a need to understand the nuance of humanitarian actors (4 observations), such as non-governmental organisations and the United Nations' Cluster System.

7. Suggestions to improve mutual understandings of organisational structures can be improved through appointing the right people as representatives (3 observations), or developing resources such as databases, standard operating procedures, training or fact sheets (3 observations).

There was a lack of clarity on the roles of whole of government agencies impacting effective and timely methods of collaboration, interoperability, and critically, accountability.

A civilian agency was not aware of all the resources it had available before or during the emergency event. As such resources that could have been called on were not.

[...] differences in organisational culture and perspectives should have been expected and are probably not only unavoidable, but a good thing, since having different approaches to a problem can be useful. However, for organisations that are not familiar with one another, it can be challenging to understand how each does business and approaches a problem, and these differences are a major source of interagency friction.

A humanitarian assistance and disaster relief reconnaissance team benefits from being formed of multi-skilled and experienced personnel who have an understanding of United Nations, non-government organisations and other governmental agencies' organisational structures and operations.

8. **Process/SOI/SOG/SOP.** There is a need for clear processes and protocols for civil-military crisis responses, preferably established ahead of time and widely consulted. In particular, there is a need for whole-of-government processes and protocols concerning agencies' roles, responsibilities, authorities, lines of reporting and culture (18 observations), and they should ideally be made available to the broader range of stakeholders involved in crisis responses, both within and outside government.

9. Greater clarity on how requests for assistance (such as under DACC) should be made, including suitable terminology, is also valuable for stakeholders (6 observations). Without clarity there are risks of duplication of effort, and delays that can lead to idle workforces.

10. Agreed processes on the management of information flows, including internal administration and media are required (17 observations). This includes how technologies are

used, relevant standards, and record keeping. Crises can encounter high volumes of information and having such processes in place can avoid confusion, reduce repetitive effort and facilitate decision making.

11. Pre-prepared information is beneficial, including on how joint mechanisms should be established and how emergency responses are managed (8 observations). So too are standard operating procedures for liaison officers and watchkeepers (7 observations), mounting and logistics processes for moving stores and people (6 observations), and having common Terms of Reference (TOR) available ahead of crisis response exercises (4 observations).

Fast paced complex operations create issues for managing processes. The recurring issue of records management remains problematic with opportunities to improve processes across a range of areas including, managing distribution lists, task requests, communication protocols, records, information management and financials.

12. **Management.** Whole-of-government management approaches, such as interdepartmental committees (IDC) and interdepartmental emergency task forces (IDETF) benefit emergency crisis responses (11 observations). Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) usually led international responses and were highly regarded among the observations.

13. While observations contained a range of feedback on what makes such whole-of-government management mechanisms effective, a frequently cited one relates to how the IDC/IDETF process is broken down into smaller elements. The provision of pre-meetings and reading material ahead of IDC/IDETF improves the utility of the outcomes and decisions made (3 observations). Side-discussions can add value to the formal whole-of-government coordination process (9 observations)—such as to discuss specific issues in operations, technical matters, or classified information. Doing so allows needlessly lengthy or technical IDC/IDETF that may not be relevant to all agencies involved.

14. The right people need to be involved in whole-of-government coordination discussions (9 observations) and liaison officers can help communicate key information if there are attendance constraints (4 observations).

15. In-country coordination is also important (3 observations) and daily meetings have contributed to effective response activities (4 observations).

16. **Strategic plan.** Comprehensive strategic level direction that reflects whole-of-government objectives is greatly beneficial for coordinated crisis responses, and adversely impacts them when not in place (17 observations). The repercussions from such uncertainty (8 observations) can include duplication of effort, miscommunication, and needless use of resources.

17. An agreed approach to manage media or public diplomacy activities was also useful in coordinating crisis response activities (6 observations).

18. Wide input should be sought when developing strategic plans (10 observations) including the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and community. They also need to be timely (8 observations). The more notice that agencies have,

the better they can respond. Clarity concerning Australian Defence Force (ADF) transition from response activities greatly assists in subsequent planning abilities (4 observations).

19. **Legal.** It is important that the appropriate legal arrangements are in place for both domestic and international crisis responses. The DACC arrangements were frequently identified as requiring attention (20 observations), which included challenges associated with how requests for assistance are made (9 observations), and that the phases that crises progress through does not suitably reflect military involvement (3 observations).

20. A number of challenges were identified in situations where the right agreements were not in place with relevant stakeholders (16 observations), many of which concerned international responses. Issues included the establishment or lack of a Status of Forces Arrangement (SOFA, 3 observations), Third-Party Notes (TPN) and diplomatic notes (5 observations), and rules of engagement (2 observations). Confusion, delays and duplicate efforts among agencies were cited as challenges that resulted from these issues.

21. Similarly, the importance of having an agreed mandate was raised (4 observations), as well as the legal arrangements for using force (3 observations).

22. Last, the need to comply with jurisdictional requirements was raised across a number of observations. Jurisdictional differences can affect the movement of people and resources over borders (6 observations). Immigration requirements have meant that only personnel who have an existing official passport are deployed (4 observations). Challenges in following complex health orders were also observed (4 observations).

The imperative to act quickly does not diminish the importance of good governance. While focus may need to shift from strategic to tactical governance, establishing fit-for-purpose arrangements to ensure delivery of essential services (both rapid response activities and business as usual) while gaining assurance over compliance with legal requirements and quality expectations is necessary.

23. **Accountability.** Civil-military activities require clear understandings among all stakeholders of each others' roles and responsibilities, including who is responsible for what (13 observations). The lead agency must be identified as well as what command and control arrangements are in place (9 observations).

24. Personnel involved in civil-military crisis responses must ensure that records are maintained of decisions made (9 observations).

25. **Policy.** Observations identified a number of specific issue-areas that required policy attention, yet none reached the minimum threshold to generate insights. This said, the need for integrated policy across government agencies was identified.

26. **Reporting.** The Reporting sub-theme was used to identify how civilian and military agencies report on information during emergency crisis responses.

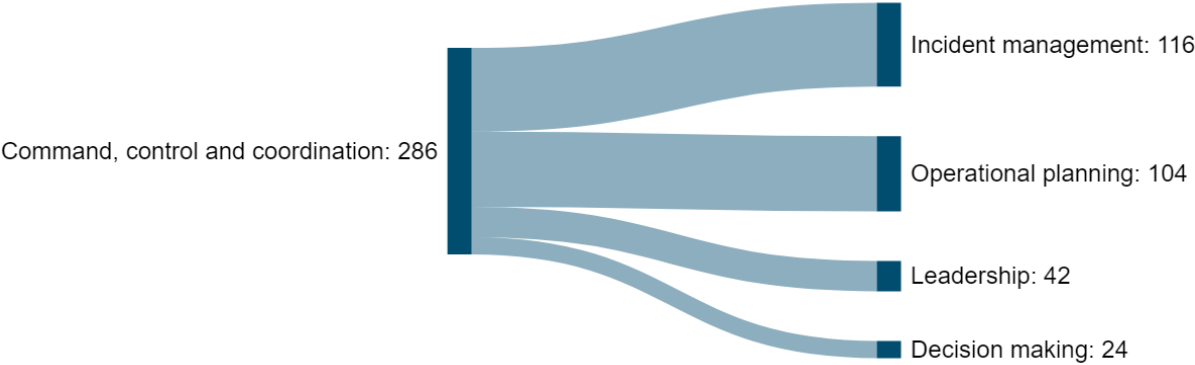
27. There needs to be an agreed approach across all stakeholders involved on what metrics and statistics ought to be tracked and how they are measured (11 observations).

- 28. Several observations identified specific issue areas that needed agreed approaches to reporting. However, the effectiveness of an activity realising the intended objective, or in other words performance measures, was the only one consistently mentioned (6 observations).
- 29. **Safety.** Responders must be kept safe from ill or deceased people during crisis. This includes communicable diseases (such as COVID-19), exposure to human remains, medical supplies and mental health support.
- 30. **Terminology.** There needs to be shared understandings of key terms and definitions for civil-military responses.
- 31. **Sub-themes that did not generate insights.** Too few observations were coded to the Standards and Doctrine to generate insights. Although 10 observations were coded under the Risk sub-theme, there was not sufficient commonality among them to identify meaningful generalisations across them.

COMMAND, CONTROL AND COORDINATION

32. Observations that were primarily coded Command, Control and Coordination were then filtered into the sub-themes Incident management, Operational planning, Leadership, and Decision making. This theme attracted 17% of the observations. Broadly, the ADF integrates well with partners and is a force multiplier in the areas of logistics and planning. This value was seen to be hindered when there was a lack of understanding of organisational limitations and responsibilities.

Figure 4 – Observations coded to Command, Control and Coordination theme



- 33. **Incident management.** The incident management sub-theme was used to identify matters in how crises were responded to. There was a strong indication of the need for coordination during civil-military responses (13 observations). This can be challenging with large numbers of stakeholders involved, but when there is integration, there are effective outcomes. A lack of synchronisation, risks duplication of effort. Competing priorities can present challenges in how incidents are triaged (8 observations).
- 34. There was strong feedback that the ADF integrates well on civil-military activities, adapts to the situation at hand and provides meaningful support (14 observations). Many observations also reflected on how to best utilise ADF capabilities for the situations at hand and avoid unnecessary taskings (10 observations).

35. ADF's ability to provide logistics support was highly regarded (15 observations), including its ability to move stores, fuel and difficult items. A number of issues associated with incident management were also identified. An ADF presence is very visible (3 observations), which can be positive for morale but also risks overshadowing civilian response activities. There can be overlapping capabilities with the private sector, and so care should be taken that ADF responses can work well with, and not displace local business (8 observations).

36. **Operational planning.** Operational planning needs to be inclusive of both civilian and military considerations, of whole-of-government objectives, as well as factors outside of government. With widespread involvement there will be better and more effective outcomes (18 observations). Planning should reflect the specific needs, effects or requirements requested (7 observations). Planning should start early so that timely advice can be prepared (9 observations). It is also important to plan how information flows will be managed including identifying specific points of contact (3 observations).

37. There is value in being flexible with planning (6 observations). Reasons given included that excessive process can be burdensome, complicated, that compartmentalisation can hinder results, that reactivity can be unhelpful, and that bespoke solutions can work well. There can be a disconnect among agencies involved in crisis responses if they have different approaches to planning (4 observations). The ADF can provide operational planning capacity in support of broader crisis responses (4 observations).

38. Logistics was identified as critical for inclusion in operational planning (9 activities), with suggestions of central and coordinated logistics functions, and the need for early advice to move stores in place. The nuances of health assets and stores was also identified (3 observations), as was the need to plan for transition or wind-down of crises responses (5 observations).

The approach was designed along single-agency lines, with civil, police and military planning staff not situated together or even capable of using a common Local Area Network. The resulting 'stovepiping' of information and activity created significant interoperability issues that were only alleviated by the efforts of key military personnel in building effective inter-agency working relations.

39. **Leadership.** A number of observations coded under the Leadership sub-theme were too general in nature to generate meaningful insights. This said, the following takeaways had commonality of at least three separate observations as per the OILL analytical process.

40. Better outcomes were achieved when senior leaders were actively involved in crisis response management or planning (14 observations). This was especially the case when executives across civilian and military agencies were physically co-located (7 observations), though the roles of liaison officers and mid-level support staff in enabling their work was also noted (4 observations).

41. **Decision making.** Personnel need to understand, and be given the authority to perform their roles during crisis responses, including chain of command. Doing so enables timely decisions to be made when triaging competing priorities.

42. Physically co-locating individuals will benefit response activities. If this is not possible, their full inclusion in interdepartmental meetings and ability to speak at the appropriate classification is also beneficial.

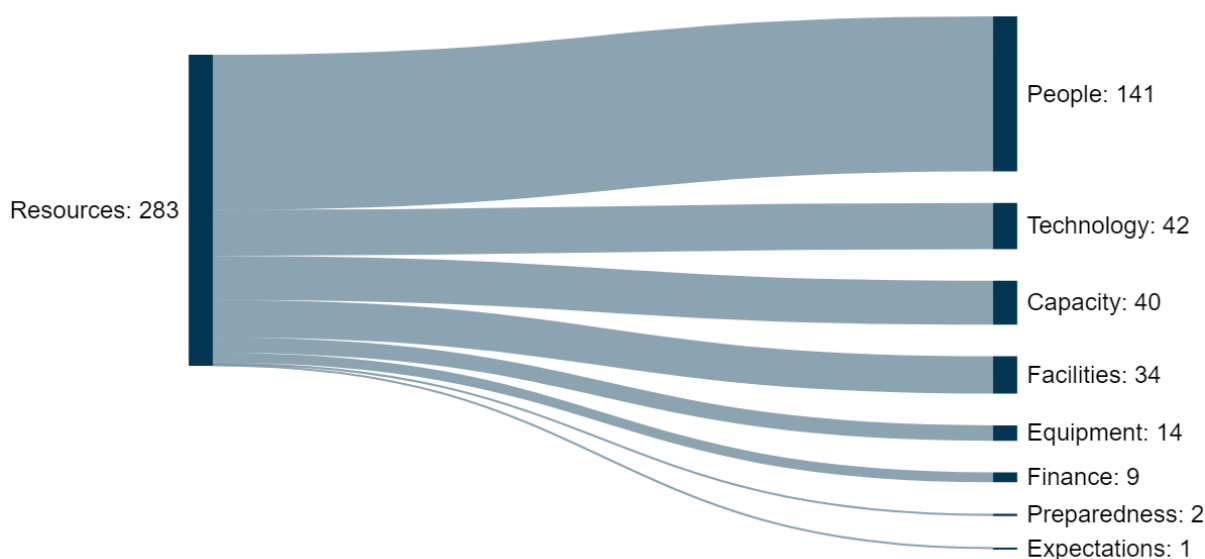
RESOURCES

43. Observations coded against resources were filtered into the following sub-themes:

- a. **People.** This sub-theme was used to identify responders' workforce resourcing issues, as opposed to intangible considerations addressed under the People national theme.
- b. **Communities.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues in resourcing for communities, as opposed to the Communities national theme which addresses a broader range of issue areas.
- c. **Engagement.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues with responders' engagement, as opposed to community engagement addressed under the Communities theme.
- d. **Recovery.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues in how recovery is resourced, as opposed to the resourcing of recovery under the Resources theme.
- e. **Resilience.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues in resourcing resilience, as opposed to community resilience addressed under the Communities theme.
- f. **Preparedness.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues with responders' preparedness, as opposed to community preparedness addressed under the Communities theme.
- g. **Expectations.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues with the management of agency resourcing expectations, as opposed to community expectations addressed under the Communities theme.

44. Significantly, the greatest weight of observations concerned the capabilities of the individuals assigned to the operations and the corresponding access to relevant communication systems. The message here appears to be that the ADF should be more proactive in its training or selection of liaison officers and also enabling them with the appropriate technology.

Figure 5 – Observations coded to Resources theme



45. **People.** This sub-theme was used to identify responders' workforce resourcing issues, as opposed to intangible considerations addressed under the People national theme. A significant number of observations highlighted the value of Liaison Officers and similar representatives during civil-military crisis responses (43 observations). Across observations it was emphasised their criticality to success, that more are needed, and that they are instrumental to enabling cross-agency planning, coordination, deconfliction, situational awareness and overall response activity success.

46. Careful selection of Liaison Officers is required. Liaison Officers should have sufficient experience and knowledge of the organisation they represent, and be well networked with their colleagues (16 observations). Liaison Officers should be supported with clarity on their role, training and appropriate communications equipment (8 observations).

47. Other people resourcing issues were identified in the value of having language skills for overseas responses (3 observations), civilian skills or experience that could be leveraged (4 observations). The value of gender advisors was also highlighted as valuable for effective crisis response outcomes (6 observations).

Liaison Officers, at all levels, continue to show their value, however they must be reciprocal, appropriate for the role and supported by both the originating organisation and the receiving organisation. They need to be included in all events to ensure they have the same information and are trusted by both parties. This trust needs to be continually developed over time.

48. **Technology.** Civil-military response activities need interoperable technologies (such as radio, communications, and internet) (12 observations). Technology limitations have seen personnel rely on locally- or personally-sourced civilian devices and applications (9 observations). Many stakeholders will prefer to use unclassified ICT systems (6 observations). Liaison Officers and those involved in Civil-Military Cooperation were

identified as especially needing ICT accounts and equipment to effectively perform their roles (7 observations).

49. At the same time, when classified communication systems are used, accounts and terminals need to be made available and interoperable (3 observations), though issues of security protocols and the need to share/know were also identified (3 observations). Bandwidth and connectivity issues are often challenges during crises (3 observations), though there have been successful rapid deployments of fit for purpose/bespoke systems (3 observations).

50. **Capacity.** Greater capacity depth can be realised to respond to crises by pooling resources or capabilities from multiple stakeholders, such as non-governmental organisations (6 observations) and private enterprises (5 observations), Where ADF capacity cannot reach, the private sector has been a positive source of logistics solutions (6 observations).

51. **Facilities.** Crisis responses needs dedicated facilities for operational planning (7 observations). Their accessibility should be taken into consideration, as there can be challenges in issuing access or needing to escort civilian stakeholders on Defence facilities (7 observations).

52. ADF facilities have been used well during crises for temporary shelter, warehousing, accommodation or community service hubs (6 observations) though their use must be balanced against base protocols, staffing, operating hours, warehousing, their availability against civilian alternatives, and for some non-governmental organisations, the risk of perceived bias of using them.

53. **Equipment.** A number of specific considerations were identified among observations coded under the Equipment sub-theme, and it was difficult to make any meaningful insights. However, many observations was the sense that some equipment is more useful than others in crisis responses, including in respect to their suitability for the uses required.

54. **Finance.** Budget constraints hamper crisis response activities. This can be caused by inadequate funding or specific funding arrangements being inaccessible.

There was a lack of familiarity on the details of contracts held by other governmental agencies. There was a need to have visibility of all those other governmental agencies' contracts in order to utilise them.

55. **Sub-themes that did not generate insights.** Too few observations were coded to the Preparedness and Expectations sub-themes to generate insights.

56. No observations were coded to the sub-themes of Communities, Engagement, Recovery, or Resilience.

COMMUNICATION

57. Observations coded against Communication were then identified against the sub-themes Internal communication, Media, and Public information. While not an insignificant weight of observations (13%) was coded against this theme, the messages appear to reinforce

previous themes. For example, the lack of common information flows, battle rhythms and technology created duplication and information overload across the response organisation.

Figure 9 – Observations coded to Communication theme



58. **Internal communication.** This sub-theme was used to identify communication matters among civil and military agencies in the context of an emergency crisis response, as opposed to within specific agencies.

59. Information needs to be shared in a whole-of-government approach during civil-military responses (14 observations). Timely information enables decision making and planning in line with broader efforts, and conversely when there are delays or the wrong or inconsistent information is provided, it can cause confusion, affect action or decisions, prevent planning, and take resources to rectify. Some of the adverse effects mentioned among observations included that agencies start operating in isolation, logistics are affected and even people’s lives can be put at risk while waiting for information (30 observations). Sometimes there is an unwillingness to share information (3 observations).

There were too many situation reports from all agencies involved responses, with different versions and sequencing. [...] This led to inefficiencies and delays in producing briefing products. More importantly, it allowed for ‘different versions of the same story’ in circulation. This scenario highlighted the need for one whole-of-government situation report that is controlled by the lead department. This will also allow for a ‘single point of truth’ in Canberra collating and verifying multiple reporting sources into one single Australian Government product.

60. When there are too many information flows, or high volumes of information, as can occur during crises, staff can become overwhelmed, and there can be challenges with version control and sequencing (5 observations). There is therefore a need for agreed and consistent information flows (15 observations). Pre-prepared briefings and delivering information or drafts early and regularly was favourably viewed (9 observations). So too were adesignated points of contacts, liaison networks and working groups and steering groups to facilitate internal communication (9 observations).

61. The impact of technology on internal communication was highlighted across the observations. Interoperable technological communication solutions are needed

(10 observations), though when there are many platforms available, this can lead to missed information (3 observations). The security classifications of different agencies' systems is also problematic and can prevent key stakeholders, such as in the humanitarian sector, from being fully informed (7 observations).

Humanitarian community feedback was very critical of the paucity of information available to them. In addition, there were instances where documents originating from the humanitarian community could not be re-shared as they had been over classified when added to the ICT infrastructure.

While information sharing may be an issue in disaster response, it is often a far more unwieldy issue in complex emergencies. It is recognised that there are constraints when it comes to sharing information and all stakeholders have their own protocols for safeguarding and sharing information. This can inhibit stakeholder ability to build relationships and coordinate efforts. Likewise, a lack of understanding as to why certain pieces of information cannot be shared creates perceptions of intentional deception and/or obstruction.

While relationships and rapport are important, processes and systems ensure consistency when communicated and effectively understood.

62. **Media.** Crisis response benefit from establishing a timely and coordinated approach to media management. There should be whole-of-government media releases (10 observations) that balance coverage of civilian and military elements (3 observations), and adequate resourcing for social media platforms (5 observations).

...aspects of Australia's response that did not involve the military were less evident and recognised in the public sphere.

63. **Public information.** Information on civil-military crisis responses needs to be communicated coherently in support of a single, whole-of-government narrative (10 observations). In its absence, public stakeholders do not have situational awareness (5 observations), communication opportunities can be lost (3 observations), and ADF may have limited authorisation to provide context to its activities (4 observations).

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

64. Observations coded against Capability development were split into the sub-themes Exercising, Training and development, Lessons management, and Knowledge management. The key takeaway from the observations across this theme is the importance of cross-agency understanding. Exercises and combined training were seen to be clear enablers for operationally ready task forces.

65. **Exercising.** Whole-of-government exercises provide valuable experience for all involved to understand each other and how they operate (12 observations, of which 5 observations concerned the benefits for civilians in understanding military processes and

functions, and 3 observations on the benefit of the ADF factoring in whole-of-government considerations).

66. The facilitation of whole-of-government exercises is an investment that pays dividends (7 observations). They enable relationships to be developed (8 observations) and lead to better outcomes during crisis response activities (8 observations).

67. More whole-of-government exercises should be conducted (6 observations) and they should involve a wide range of domestic and international stakeholders (6 observations). Stakeholders will have more useful exercise experiences when they are involved in exercise preparation activities (6 observations), and when clear information, policies or pre-readings are provided in advance (6 observations).

The integration of civilian considerations into the early stages of military planning had a dual effect. Feedback from multiagency participants stated that early exposure to the military planning process, along with the opportunity to shape the geopolitical state was important. In addition, the military had the opportunity to engage with the whole-of government construct and adjust planning accordingly.

68. **Training and development.** The importance of training on interagency relationships, stakeholder roles and the call out process more generally were identified (13 observations).

69. While there were some particularly specific training needs listed that did not each meet the threshold for insight generation, there is a need for pre-deployment training (7 observations), training in crisis management (7 observations), and training relevant to civilian community needs (such as gender, culture, language and civil-military interactions) (8 observations).

Figure 6 – Observations coded to Capability development theme



70. **Lessons management.** There needs to be a dedicated and resourced whole-of-government capability that manages the collection, dissemination and implementation of lessons among civilian and military organisations in relation to crisis responses.

71. **Knowledge management.** The knowledge gained from crisis response activities must be better managed to inform future personnel, given that they often rotate through activities.

72. **Evaluation.** No observations were coded to the Evaluation sub-theme.
73. **Research (experimentation, exploration).** No observations were coded to the Research (experimentation, exploration) sub-theme.
74. **Simulation.** No observations were coded to the Simulation sub-theme.

Whole-of-government lessons are of limited utility if they are not disseminated, understood, and incorporated into cross-agency preparedness and contingency and operational planning.

OPERATIONS

75. Observations that were primary coded as Operations were then broken into secondary classifications: Interoperability, Situational awareness, Intelligence, and Agency-specific issues. There were no observations coded against Agency-specific issues leading to the conclusion that the 65 observations in Operations are likely to be common across agencies and operational type.

76. Of the remaining three sub-themes, the most common theme was one of information literacy. Problems in interoperability appeared to have resulted from a lack of shared understanding among the diverse civilian and military agencies. Differences in technology and equipment also appeared to magnify the confusion between agencies. The Situational Awareness and Intelligence sub-themes highlighted that a common operating picture to allow a greater sharing of information was needed and crucial for timely support activities.

A common emergency management operating picture is essential for decision support across ADF levels, emergency management and state jurisdictions.

77. **Interoperability.** Building shared understandings among diverse civilian and military agencies involved in crisis responses requires coordination. Despite differences in experience, training or procedures, a collaborative approach can facilitate interoperability and ability to interact across all jurisdictional levels.

78. Deploying with technology and equipment that is not interoperable is challenging, and in some cases manual or bespoke processes have provided more immediate solutions.

79. **Intelligence.** Agencies involved in crisis responses need to be able to share intelligence so that informed decisions can be made. Whether this involves system interoperability, or establishing a common operating picture, crisis centres need to be suitably resourced to support intelligence activities so that they can respond in a timely manner.

80. **Situational awareness.** Agencies involved in crisis responses must have a common operating picture so that all stakeholders understand what activities are being conducted.

Figure 7 – Observations coded to Operations theme



81. **Agency-specific issues.** No observations were coded to this sub-theme.

PEOPLE

82. The People national theme was used to identify the intangible elements of human interactions during crisis response activities. The People national theme is distinct from the People sub-theme which is addressed under Resources and focuses on more tangible capacity and personnel considerations.

83. The role of people was also significant across the findings. This is broader than maintaining habits of interaction with one another, though personal relationships at all levels can certainly ease the demanding tasks involved in responses. Crises can severely affect communities and those involved in responses work hard and with compassion to help others when they are at their most vulnerable. Ensuring there are standards and mechanisms in place to adequately resource and protect the human element of responses is important too.

84. Across the observations the importance of pre-existing relationships was identified. This finding reinforces the military norm that existing relationships in high-stress, low information environments enables rapid and coordinated responses.

85. **Relationships.** Relationships among personnel involved in crisis responses were often central to the success of activities. Includes contractors, staff and volunteers at the tactical level, but also among different organisations more generally.

86. When there were pre-existing relationships in place—whether through training, exercises or from previous emergency responses—collaboration occurred much more easily. When relationships were not already in place this became an overhead that had to be built in on short notice.

Well established, long-term relationships were central to ensuring Australia was able to respond effectively, both domestically and internationally.

Habitual relationships with Whole-of-Government Agencies are beneficial. Relationships are developed and maintained by discussions, exercises and interoperability training synchronised at the highest level. This facilitates the development of understanding of respective capabilities, and roles and responsibilities.

Figure 8 – Observations coded to People theme



87. **Human factors.** The wellbeing of personnel responding to crises was identified consistently across numerous observations, in particular the management of fatigue and mental health support.

88. **Culture.** There is a need to understand organisational cultures, not only in terms of civilian and military agencies, but also non-governmental organisations and private companies.

89. The cultures of affected communities must also be understood so that response activities can best meet their needs. This applies to both local civilians on international responses as well as military counterparts of host nations.

People were working hard, under significant pressure, often dealing with stressful situations, for long hours over protracted periods... Some agencies' fatigue management policies are unworkable in an emergency but that does not remove the need for an approach to fatigue management.

COMMUNITIES

90. Observations coded to the Communities national theme were further grouped under the sub-themes of Engagement, Expectations, Recovery, Preparedness and Resilience. Preparedness and Resilience sub-themes did not generate meaningful insights owing to the small number of observations coded.

91. While the number of observations coded to the Communities theme is fewer compared to some of the other national themes, it nonetheless highlighted the importance of stakeholder awareness outside of civilian and military responders. This reinforces previous findings in this Report that stakeholder awareness enables more efficient incident responses.

Figure 9 – Observations coded to Communities theme



92. **Engagement.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues with community engagement, as opposed to responders' engagement addressed under the Resources theme.

93. Communities need to be engaged during civil-military crisis responses (9 observations). Without adequate warnings or notifications (3 observations), communities will not understand what agencies are doing (6 observations) and may complain (3 observations). Beneficial practices include taking the nuance of local culture and needs into consideration (3 observations), engaging key community leaders (3 observations), and involving local stakeholders or capabilities in activities (5 observations). Broader community benefits can also be realised from non-military activities (5 observations), such as holding sporting matches, environmental initiatives or celebrating International Women's Day.

94. **Expectations.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues with community expectations, as opposed to the management of agency expectations addressed under the Resources theme.

95. Organisations outside of ADF, in particular other government agencies but also civilian stakeholders, more generally often have unrealistic expectations of the ADF ability to respond to crises.

Individual missions must also tailor their approach to the needs and expectations of the local population. Regular communication with ordinary people has been an important part of this process and there needs to be progressively more attention to cultural awareness and community outreach and engagement.

96. **Recovery.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues in community recovery, as opposed to the resourcing of recovery under the Resources theme.

97. Community understandings of available assistance from the ADF is limited during crises.

98. **Preparedness.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues with community preparedness, as opposed to responders' preparedness addressed under the Resources theme. However, too few observations were coded to this sub-theme to generate insights.

99. **Resilience.** This sub-theme was used to identify issues in community resilience, as opposed to resourcing resilience addressed under the Resources theme. However, too few observations were coded to this Resilience sub-theme to generate insights.

CONCLUSION

100. The *Recurring Issues from Australian Civil-Military Responses 1977 - 2022* report has revealed how civilian and military agencies need to better understand each others' roles, responsibilities and processes when involved in crisis responses at home and abroad. This need for 'information literacy' extends to the governance arrangements for domestic crisis responses, especially the call out procedures for Defence Assistance to the Civil Community activities, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) activities conducted outside of Australia.

101. The insights generated through this body of work are not necessarily revelations to civil-military practitioners. Rather, this Reports value lies in the statistically significant and traceable empirical data that underpins each finding. Good policy needs good data, and the database with coded observations that was developed to offer a meaningful way to inform Australia's civil-military nexus.

102. Questions and comments on the Project can be directed to lessons@acmc.gov.au.

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