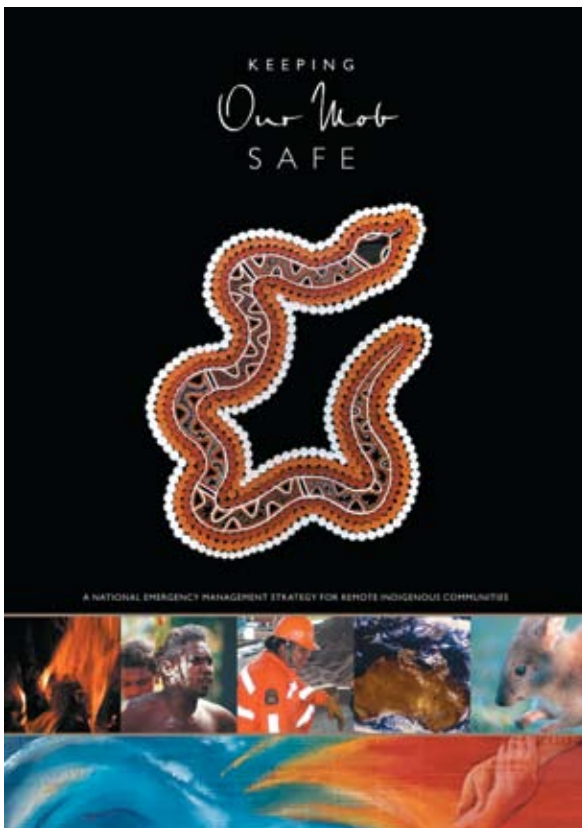


REPORTS

‘Keeping our mob safe’ A national emergency management strategy for remote indigenous communities



The National Emergency Management Strategy document.

The National Emergency Management Strategy for Remote Indigenous Communities: Keeping Our Mob Safe was launched by the Federal Attorney-General, the Hon. Philip Ruddock MP, at a ceremony held at the Bidadanga Aboriginal Community, near Broome in Western Australia on 24 July 2007. The Strategy recognises the emergency management needs of remote Indigenous communities.

The aim of the Strategy is to improve community safety in remote Indigenous communities through a more coordinated approach to emergency management at local, state/territory and national levels.

The strategy provides the basis for a coordinated and cooperative approach for risk assessment, decision making and resource allocation. Its focus on preparedness and prevention enables the lack of capacity in remote Indigenous communities to be addressed by governments and organisations at all levels before communities are faced with emergencies. Among the priorities identified are training and education needs, communication and engagement issues, and building community partnerships.

The Bidadanga Community welcomed several hundred guests from other Indigenous communities and government and non-government agencies from Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland and the Australian Government. The Traditional Owners, the Karrajarrri people, hosted a smoking ceremony to welcome visitors safely into their country and each of the five language groups in the community individually greeted visitors.

The Strategy was developed as a result of recommendations from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) directed review Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements (2002).

State and Territory Emergency Services Ministers agreed to enhance efforts to build community capacity within remote Indigenous communities by the adoption of a broader, national approach to emergency risk management.

With the support of States and Territory emergency services agencies, Emergency Management Australia (EMA) facilitated a series of activities and meetings on the issues in emergency management in remote Indigenous communities.

On 4 March 2005, the Augmented Australasian Police Ministers' Council (now the Ministerial Council of Police and Emergency Management) resolved to develop a national strategy addressing emergency management in remote Indigenous communities.

Development of the Strategy was undertaken by the Remote Indigenous Communities Advisory Committee (RICAC), a sub-committee of the Australian Emergency Management Committee (AEMC). It was funded by a grant from the Australian Government's 'Working Together to Manage Emergencies' initiative.

A collaborative approach to emergency management across the jurisdictions together with local government and remote Indigenous communities and relevant community leaders and organisations involved workshops and questionnaires to obtain views across the country.

The Strategy was endorsed by the ministers responsible for emergency management and Indigenous affairs for the RICAC member states/territories (NSW, QLD, SA, WA, NT) and at AEMC level in the non-member states/territories. It was also supported by the National Indigenous Council.

"Working with their Indigenous communities, State and Territory Governments will lead the implementation of the Strategy" said Mr Ruddock. "And the Australian Government will continue investing in community disaster preparedness and prevention."

The participating jurisdictions are now looking to progress capability development to match the needs expressed by each region. The RICAC will oversee the implementation of Strategy and will report on progress to the Ministerial Council through the AEMC.

The National Emergency Management Strategy for Remote Indigenous Communities: 'Keeping Our Mob Safe' is accessible on the EMA website at www.ema.gov.au.



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