



Submission No 11

Watching Brief on the War on Terrorism

Organisation: Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services

Contact Person: Darryl Pepper AFSM
Director

Address: Northern Territory



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NORTHERN TERRITORY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

SUBMISSION ON CBR AND USAR

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CHEMICAL BIOLOGICAL AND RADIOLOGICAL (CBR)

The Northern Territory has a CBR Working Group, (NTCBRWG) which consists of representatives from stakeholder agencies. These are;

- ⇒ NT Police
- ⇒ NT Fire & Rescue Service
- ⇒ NT Emergency Service
- ⇒ NT Health
- ⇒ St John
- ⇒ Military (observer status)

The purpose of this group is to develop a CBR response capability in the Northern Territory.

At present there are 2 broad categories relating to CBR. That is Crisis and Consequence Management. The NTCBRWG deals with building a capability within the Northern Territory for consequence management only.

At the national level there is also a CBR working Group known as the National CBR Working Group (NCBRWG). Membership of this group is the chair from each State and Territory working Group, representatives from ASIO, the Australian Defence Force and is chaired by a member of Emergency Management Australia.

The Northern Territory is represented on this working group.

The last meeting of the NCBRWG was in Victoria from 9 to 11 April 2003.

Agenda items from this forum were;

- ⇒ updates from each state and territory
- ⇒ the National CBR Strategy
- ⇒ the National CBR Coordination Arrangements
- ⇒ outcomes from exercise "Raw Horizon" in Perth Western Australia
- ⇒ the proposed training courses.

The Commonwealth government is providing the Northern Territory (along with other States and Territories) with \$1.7 million worth of equipment and training. Delivery of this equipment is dependent on the States and Territories entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commonwealth.

This \$1.7 m will provide the Northern Territory with an initial capability.

It is intended that this capability will be stored in the Darwin region and should the need arise, these resources will be able to be transported anywhere in the Northern Territory. It is intended to extend this capability to a second cache of equipment to be located in the southern region.

Quite separate to this, the NT Police are also building a CBR emergency response capability. . (NT Government has already provided \$537,000 to enhance police first response capability)

Should a major CBR incident occur in the Northern Territory (or any of the States or Territories), it is recognised that there will be a need for interstate support. The very nature of these incidents ensures they are protracted. In recognition of this, Emergency Management Australia (EMA) have produced (in draft) the National Coordination Arrangements for Responding to the Deliberate Use Of Chemical, Biological and Radiological Materials. This document details arrangements for assistance from the national level.

The Northern Territory has not at this time signed the MOU. The Commonwealth is currently making minor changes to the wording of the original MOU and when completed and agreed, Cabinet has approved the Director of Fire and Emergency Services signing the MOU.

EMA (Mt Macedon) has commenced a "train the trainer" program for the States and Territories with a maximum of 5 nominations from each. The NTCBRWG has nominated 5 suitable people from the Northern Territory who are there at present. These people are from;

1. Northern Territory Fire and Rescue X 2
2. Northern Territory Police X 1
3. St John Ambulance X 1

4. Northern Territory Health & Community Services

An additional member from (Radiation) Health and Community Services has also been sent to Sydney for GR135 (radiation detector) training.

On their return to the Northern Territory, these people will provide ongoing training in the use of the equipment to staff from key response organisations.

URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE (USAR)

The Northern Territory has a USAR Working Group which is at present in it's infancy. The structure for this group mirrors that of the CBR working group in that the Chairs of each State and Territory working group make up the membership of the National USAR working group and so on into the international working group.

The northern Territory is represented on the national working party.

The last meeting of this national group was 3 & 4 June 2003. Agenda items from this meeting were;

- ⇒ A report from the Australian Defence Force Incident Response Regiment on their USAR development and deployment criteria.
- ⇒ The national USAR familiarisation Training for Specialists. Coordinated and run in NSW for Doctors, Engineers, canine handlers and other specialists.
- ⇒ Introduction of a national Identity Card (similar to that of NZ) for USAR trained staff and specialists.
- ⇒ The conduct of a national multi agency USAR exercise.
- ⇒ Issues arising with interstate responses such as legal indemnity, compensation, personal insurance, workers compensation, quarantine, etc.
- ⇒ Protocols for the provision and receipt of international assistance.
- ⇒ Standards for USAR search dogs.

The Northern Territory has very little USAR capability. Whilst other states are in similar situations, across Australia there is a wide range of USAR capability. The Northern Territory Tri Service is at present developing a cabinet submission in regard to USAR equipment requirements.

This is now being brought to the attention of the Federal government and a motion for the commonwealth government to fund the resourcing of the states and territories in the same manner as it has agreed to for CBR, is being forwarded through Emergency Management Australia.

Darryl Pepper AFSM
Director
Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services
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