



Submission No 6

Watching Brief on the War on Terrorism

Organisation: Fire & Emergency Services Authority
of Western Australia

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Ms Margot Kerley
Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



9 May, 2003

Dear Ms Kerley,

I am writing regarding your request for written clarification of evidence given in the 2nd April 2003 hearing in Perth to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

The areas requiring clarification are:

- What lifting equipment, heavy lift cranes etc are available to the emergency services to assist in the aftermath of a terrorist attack? Is there an intention to develop a register of such equipment?

Perth and the major centres of Western Australia have a considerable construction industry and there is heavy lift and cranes available for use by emergency services. These resources have been called upon in the past for other emergencies and future requirements will be dealt with in a similar manner.

These resources are detailed as part of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) structure arrangements. The plans detail the resources available during any emergency, not for just a terrorist initiated event. Additionally, each Police Station maintains a resource lists as part of their responsibilities. The Police resource list process is audited each year.

It is intended that as the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability of the state is further developed, resource lists of heavy lift and other equipment will be developed for particular areas of the state as part of the hazard management authorities responsibilities.

- Are structural engineers immediately available to determine the safety of damaged structures before emergency staff enter them?

FESA currently utilises local authority structural engineers to determine the stability of buildings during or following fires. It is also intended that structural engineers will form part of an increased USAR capability when fully implemented.

- What arrangements are in place to train and coordinate the search and response teams noted above?

FESA is currently developing its USAR capability. This includes purchasing specialist USAR equipment, developing standing operating procedures etc and training staff and volunteers in its use and techniques of USAR.

The first of a series of training programs is scheduled to commence during May 2003. All relevant Fire Service and State Emergency Services staff and a significant number of regional volunteers will be trained to a category one level during this calendar year.

Further specialist training is planned to national standards for search teams and leaders once the initial training and development is in place. It anticipated the first of the specialist level of training will be completed also this year.

I trust this information assist to clarify the evidence.

Yours sincerely



KEVIN CUNEO
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