Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

POST-INCIDENT REVIEW - EVACUATION OF RG CASEY

1. This Post-Incident Review (the Review) provides recommendations to improve organisational resilience (emergency management and business continuity) at DFAT's Canberra-based premises following the bomb threat at RG Casey Building on 2 August 2023. Some of the recommendations have been made previously **s 47E(d)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. EXD to **formalise incident management and preparedness arrangements** for Canberra-based premises, including clarifying divisional roles and responsibilities (EXD, OPO, DSD, PPD, IMD, SCD), and ensuring regular engagement between DFAT management, the DFAT disability network, and co-tenants of DFAT-occupied premises.

    i. EXD will require an additional two FTE to manage and coordinate emergency response functions on an ongoing basis.

b. OPO and PPD, in consultation with EXD, to ensure the Canberra-based **warden and first aid networks are adequately resourced, appropriately trained, and easily identifiable** to undertake warden and first aid duties

    i. OPO **s 47E(d)** for all wardens and first aid officers

    ii. OPO **s 47E(d)** to effectively communicate with staff at emergency evacuation areas.

c. DSD, in consultation with EXD, **s 47E(d)**

d. SCD, in consultation with EXD, **s 47E(d)** **s 47E(d)**

e. IMD to **explore the feasibility and limitations of s 47E(d)**

f. All divisions to **update business continuity procedures on a quarterly basis,** including ensuring that divisional phone trees are up-to-date and critical work functions are mapped.

    i. Divisions to **highlight s 47E(d)** and other **s 47E(d)** dependencies in their plans, as well as the likely number of staff who would require access to **s 47E(d)** to undertake critical work during an emergency incident.

    ii. EXD to **review business continuity arrangements for critical work areas** of the department, **s 47E(d)**

g. OPO and EXD to develop a **protocol to identify available workstations for critical work** in other DFAT Canberra-based facilities during an incident.

h. OPO to **s 47E(d)** in fire stairwells.

ISSUES

Roles and Responsibilities

2. The department's approach to Canberra-based emergency management and business continuity arrangements is shared across seven divisions (EXD, OPO, PPD, DSD, IMD, SCD and FND) with no central coordination point. **s 47E(d)** **s 47E(d)** proposed clarifying roles and responsibilities in an emergency management framework. EXD will lead this work in consultation with all stakeholders.

Evacuation Processes

3. The sequencing of the evacuation process was inconsistent with DFAT's Emergency Management Manual and existing processes for the evacuation of the RG Casey building as no announcement was made to advise staff on the situation prior to **s 47E(d)** triggering the evacuation alarm. **s 47E(d)**

4. The Chief Warden made subsequent announcements once he had reached the emergency panel **s 47E(d)**

   This led to:

   i. congested emergency stairwells **s 47E(d)**

   ii. No instructions issued to wardens or staff causing confusion amongst staff. There were reports of staff not treating the evacuation as a serious incident or as 'another trial evacuation'.
   s 47E(d)

   iv. A lack of support to staff with Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and those requiring medication or additional assistance.

   v. Staff evacuating past/through threat areas not yet cleared by the AFP.

Staff Safety

5. Several issues were identified through the warden debrief that posed potential risks to staff safety and wellbeing, including:

   i. The timing of the evacuation of the building, which was inconsistent with AFP advice

   ii. The location of **s 47E(d)** evacuation points **s 47E(d)**

   iii. Lack of amenities at or near evacuation points

   iv. Inconsistent identification of wardens and first aid officers **s 47E(d)**

   v. Out of date evacuation diagrams at emergency exits showing incorrect evacuation points

   vi. Wardens unaware of their responsibilities during an evacuation and at an evacuation point

   vii. Inadequate communication between wardens, including an out-of-date warden phone tree

   viii. Inadequate communication between wardens and staff and co-tenants assembled at emergency evacuation areas

   ix. Insufficient wardens and first aid officers.

Incident Management and Response

6. An incident response centre was established **s 47E(d)** for the Incident Management Team (IMT) **s 47E(d)** . This proved to be an effective measure in coordinating the department's approach however no formal arrangements are currently in place.

7. **s 47E(d)** there are no formal mechanisms in place to establish an Incident Controller, or the IMT, nor are there established roles and responsibilities for the positions. EXD will develop an enterprise management framework to clarify these roles and responsibilities. The framework will also clarify roles and responsibilities and methods of communication between the Incident Controller, Chief Warden and Deputy Chief Warden during an incident, **s 47E(d)**

s 47E(d)

The Business Continuity Standard requires that building tenants establish an Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) comprising senior management, tenants, Chief Warden and an occupant with a disability. EXD recommends that the EPC meet as a group on a quarterly basis across all DFAT's Canberra-based premises to provide assurance that effective emergency response procedures are in place.

External Communications

9. During an incident response media attention is possible, as in this case. EXD recommends that SCD, in consultation with EXD, develop protocols s 47E(d)   .

Staff Communications

10. Communications to staff is heavily reliant on s 47E(d)   In this incident, in the absence of an alternative, information was passed to staff s 47E(d)

    c. Any ICT solution will need to be considered in the context of likely network congestion during an emergency and views of other key stakeholders.

11. Communication to staff at the emergency assembly areas was hindered due to the lack of trained wardens and inadequate communication procedures within the warden network. This resulted in staff not moving to, or staying at, the appropriate emergency evacuation areas, and meant relevant incident information could not be passed directly from the Chief Warden to staff. The warden network could consider loudspeakers to relay communications to staff at emergency assembly areas.

12. The DFAT crisis management group communications chat was also out-of-date following the recent organisational restructure and SES movements. This single communications channel should be updated quarterly as part of divisional business continuity updates.

Business Continuity Arrangements

13. Given the extended nature of the incident several critical work areas where unable to continue their work,
    s 47E(d)

    . Those areas with well-established and practiced business continuity arrangements (s 47E(d)   were able to effectively transition to their alternative working arrangements.

14. EXD recommends that divisions update their business continuity arrangements on a quarterly basis to ensure business continuity arrangements are fit for purpose and can support individual work units to maintain critical business functions during a business continuity disruption.

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BUILDING EVACUATION WARDEN DEBRIEF

Thursday 3 August 11:00am, Gareth Evans Theatre

Facilitator: s22(1)(a)(ii)   Chief Warden

Timeline of incident
s 37(1)(c), s 47E(d)

Key Points from Chief Warden

- Reminder for Wardens to not feed rumour mill. Keep communication to staff accurate and factual.
- Bomb threat protocol is managed differently to fire evacuations
  - For staff with mobility issues Wardens are to contact via the WIP handsets
  - Approval will be given to evacuate these staff via lifts.
- Wardens need to know secondary locations
  - South secondary zone is next to church not across the road

What went well? (Warden feedback)

1. The earlier practice session assisted with this real evacuation
2. People followed direction and cooperated when asked to 'move on'
3. Messaging was good via WhatsApp
   a. E.g. advice not to re-enter building when alarms stopped

What can be improved? (Warden feedback)

4. The announcement made to staff to use the secondary evacuation points occurred after the evacuation was triggered. Any announcement to use alternative sites should be made during the alert phase or at the commencement of the evacuation tone.
5. Warden WhatsApp group was out-of-date with staff unable to update.
6. Secondary locations for bomb threats shouldn't be predetermined (increased chance of pre-arranged attack).
7. s 47E(d)

8. Guidance regarding clear desk policy when an immediate evacuation is ordered.
9. Exemptions for people with medical conditions to remove belongings.
   a. Information regarding PEEPs to be circulated to staff
10. Some staff believed it was a trial evacuation.
11. FAO was speaking with staff outside to identify possible medical conditions
12. First Aid Officer and Warden networks to be better integrated in evacuation processes

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13. Communication at evacuation points was poor.

    a.   Consideration to be given for using a megaphone to relay messaging to staff at evac points.

14. Review of Assembly Area Wardens and Communication Wardens.

15. Need to improve staff communication with consideration of:

    a.   Phone tress FAS to AS to staff

    b.   Whole of DFAT messaging

16. Request for use of standard messaging to minimise confusion and miscommunication, including use of colour codes for evacuations and standard scripts.

17. More drills/training for different emergency events

18. Concerns over use of the WIP handsets and how long to wait.

19. Concerns with staff leaving evacuation areas and management of staff once there.

20. s 47E(d)

21. Business continuity – Division/Branches/Sections to have comms groups to relay messaging.

22. Are division business continuity plans current?

23. s 47E(d)

Issues raised with Chief Warden

24. There needs to be a callout for additional Wardens/FAOs

25. Consideration given to pay wardens to encourage staff to nominate much like FAOs are currently paid.

26. Staffing awaited direction from Warden before exiting building during building evacuation alarm.

27. Notification for staff of first and secondary evacuation locations

28. Comment that some wardens were standing together and not passing on messaging to staff.

29. Found it hard to communicate with other wardens to get updates and relied on word of mouth.

30. Not all wardens were members of the WhatsApp group (out-of-date)

31. Audits of the list of wardens on each floor, to ensure that all recorded wardens are in fact currently located in RG Casey, not on posting/on secondment etc.

32. Staff with a PEEP may need direction/assistance from a warden in case of an emergency. If there are limited available wardens there may be nobody else who can assist or is aware some staff may need additional assistance.

33. Evacuation maps are out of date and staff are not aware of where they are located.

34. Consideration given earlier to moving to business continuity arrangements with some areas undertaking critical work having to do so on mobile phones.

35. Timeframes for typical evacuations could be developed that will aid areas in determining if they need to move to business continuity arrangements or not.

36. Access to water and toilets for extended evacuations.

37. No alert tone ahead of evacuation confused staff as to what to do.

38. Staff believed it was a drill not a real evacuation.

39. Deputies did not attend the ECO Control Room as they followed the evacuation directions.

40. Evacuation maps to be better identified within buildings.

41. Inconsistent warden clothing/identification across Canberra buildings.

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IMPLEMENTATION AND ENABLING COMMITTEE
10 October 2023

AGENDA ITEM #X – Domestic Emergency Management Framework
Lead Group/Division: ESG/EXD

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the committee **provide advice** on risks and implementation progress of an enabling services project aimed at developing new emergency management arrangements for DFAT Canberra.

ISSUES

2. The post-incident reports of the s 47E(d)   2 August RG Casey building evacuations following bomb threats identified weaknesses in current arrangements to manage and respond to critical incidents in Canberra. The reports, led by EXD, identified a lack of clarity at the governance and business process owner level, and other aspects across the Enabling Services Group that require uplift. EXD seeks Committee advice on approaches to identifying and managing governance and implementation risks, including to provide the Chief Operating Officer with assurance on next steps.

3. EXD is now coordinating this critical enabling services project to ensure a closer integration of incident management and business continuity arrangements under a single emergency management framework. The Project Plan is at **Attachment A**.

4. To address these gaps and conflicts, COO has agreed to changes in the proposed governance and operational arrangements of managing incidents and emergencies in DFAT Canberra. The changes are intended to make clear roles and responsibilities during an incident, and to ensure good governance practices are in place.

5. Proposed arrangements, currently being reviewed by ESG stakeholders, are captured in a flowchart (**Attachment B**) and Terms of Reference (**Attachments C and D**). These changes will largely influence the overarching governance while keeping in place the current roles and responsibilities for in-line management functions (risk, property, security, people). Once arrangements are finalised and agreed to by COO, EXD will facilitate – with the help of an external provider – a scenario exercise with the required personnel to test arrangements. This will also start to mature roles and responses for the department. EXD proposes annual tests with the governance and operational personnel.

6. EXD identifies the key risk as cultural. The post-incident reports noted a lack of clarity in governance, roles and responsibility, much of which relates to a lack of comfort or familiarity with a command and control structure. It is critical that this system is in place for critical incident management and business continuity arrangements for emergencies to be managed quickly, appropriately and safely.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7. The following resourcing changes have been proposed but can be absorbed from within current arrangements:
    *   Disband the current Enterprise Business Continuity Taskforce (EBCTF)

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- An Emergency Management Committee (EMC) will replace the EBCTF and integrate oversight/governance of incident management, departmental response and business continuity arrangements. Membership of the EMC would be largely the same as the EBCTF.
- Establish an operational level Emergency Response Team (ERT) to oversee the Chief Warden responsibilities and Incident Controller responsibilities as required. The team will focus the specific incident and be agile enough to address a range of incidents from initial notification to business continuity arrangements if the incident is ongoing.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

8. Risks to project implementation are identified in the Project Plan (**Attachment A**). However, the risks to DFAT staff safety, operations and trust are significant if emergency management is not managed well in the future.

CONSULTATION

9. The following divisions, external agencies and stakeholders have been consulted:
    - IMD, DSD, OPO and PPD
    - Other tenants in the building
    - Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (lead agency on APS Business Continuity Monthly COP)
    - s 47F(1)   Emergency Management consultant.

COMMUNICATION

10. There will be an extensive strategic communications plan to advise all staff of the new Emergency Management Framework. The plan will include the following products:
    - Intranet page update, Administrative Circular and Staff Bulletin update
    - FAS EXD email to Division Heads and STO Directors
    - Cable from EXD to Posts and STOs
    - Quarterly Post Operations meeting; and
    - Secretary briefing.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A. Emergency Management Project Plan

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

PREPARED BY	AUTHORISED BY
Name: s22(1)(a)(ii) Position: Business Continuity Officer Date: 26/9/23	Name: Paul Griffiths Position: FAS EXD Date: 5/10/23

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Project Title	New Emergency Management arrangements for DFAT		
Project Team	**Project Duration**	**Status**	**Project Completion**
s 47E(d)	3 months	Initiated	December 2023

Project overview

Rationale: The post-incident reports of the s 47E(d) 2 August RG Casey building evacuations following bomb threats identified weaknesses in current arrangements to manage and respond to critical incidents in Canberra. Key aspects required to strengthen include governance, integration of incident management and business continuity arrangements, and training and outreach.

Objective: To ensure that DFAT has appropriate emergency management systems in place in Canberra, EXD will coordinate the development of a new Emergency Management Framework. In doing so, EXD will:

- Develop a governance system (framework, terms of reference, meetings, secretariat) that integrates critical incident management and business continuity arrangements for DFAT Canberra, including with clarity on roles and responsibilities across ESG.

- Conduct an exercise for the new governance arrangements to test them, confirm role clarity and identify areas to strengthen.

Outcome Criteria: ☑Achievable   ☑Cost efficient   ☑Sustainable   ☑Reviewed as required

Approach and timeframe

EXD will deliver this project over a period of three months, in three phases.

Project phases	Key activities	Timeframe
Phase 1: Design	Review current enterprise arrangements, as they relate to DFAT Canberra premises, for: critical incident management, building evacuations and business continuity. Consult widely with all ESG Chiefs, tenants as appropriate, relevant staff representative bodies (WHS, disability network), APS agencies.	September 2023
	Draft new governance arrangements, including terms of reference, committee membership, reporting and testing arrangements.	
Phase 3: Consult and Test	Test draft arrangements with all stakeholders, seeking extensive consultation, including IEC oversight.	October 2023
	Conduct scenario exercise with final governance committee (engage consultant/s to assist, including with scenario and lessons learned).	November 2023
Phase 4: Implement	Commence new arrangements, including strong communication and outreach campaign.	December 2023

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Stakeholder Engagement
s 47E(d)

POTENTIAL RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

Risk	Controls to address the risk	Rating
Proposed model does not result in a clear command and control system, and does not address weaknesses in post-incident reports.	• Current weaknesses in critical incident management relate to governance and lack of role clarity, including on business function ownership – there is a risk that new arrangements do not fix this. • It is critical that our emergency management arrangements are command and control – not a management system that is comfortable for DFAT – there is a risk this is not followed. • Both above risks will require strong EXD leadership on consultation, outreach and collaboration.	High
Project is not delivered in a timely manner.	• Project timeframe accommodates for resourcing constraints and competing priorities. • Project scope supports an achievable baseline model, with the potential for maturity uplift in the future, as required. • Weekly updates to AS GRB to ensure project is on track.	Low
Lack of engagement and support from critical stakeholders in ESG	• Project will use a top-down approach for initial engagement, supported by AS GRB and FAS EXD. • COO support and messaging will be maintained during the Project to ensure engagement and support. • Matters will be escalated tor FAS EXD where needed.	Low

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s 37(1)(c), s 47E(d)

s 37(1)(c), s 47E(d)