



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
Environmental Health

Preparedness for Environmental Health Professionals



The more prepared you are the better the likelihood of a positive outcome

“It happened so fast. No one had time to do anything, but watch.”

— Jason Medina, [The Manhattanville Incident: An Undead Novel](#)



Temperature check?

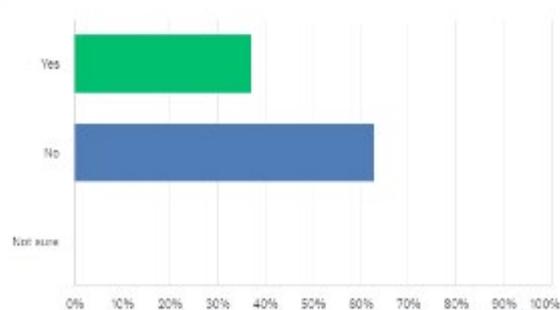
How would you rate your current level of confidence to participate in the management of an emergency incident such as a bushfire or flood?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



Have you been involved in the management of an emergency incident as an Environmental Health professional?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



3 Take Aways

- EM is going to become a more significant component of an EHO's role
- Preparedness is the key to success
- EHOs are highly skilled and well placed to contribute to EM

Four aspects of Emergency Management in WA





King's Park, Perth
October 2023

BUSHFIRE WARNING Emergency warnings are in place for fires burning near Hunterfield, Tabulam, Whilangarra, Dalveen and south of Bundsberg, QLD. Keep up to date with [ABC](#)

VIDEO: Queensland's bushfire emergency is escalating

Posted Fri 27 Oct 2023 at 10:42am



BUSHFIRE CRISIS

ABC NEWS

VIDEO: One dead, more properties feared lost as NSW bushfire threat continues near Kempsey, Mudgee and Byron Bay

Posted Tue 17 Oct 2023 at 3:52pm



NSW BUSHFIRES

ABC NEWS

Residential areas in NSW are again facing an outbreak of destructive bushfires and there, with firefighters at Woodstock and just outside Byron Bay, fighting closer to homes.

NSW and QLD October 2023



VIDEO: At least five buildings, including homes, lost in QLD bushfires

Posted Tue 28 Oct 2023 at 7:06pm

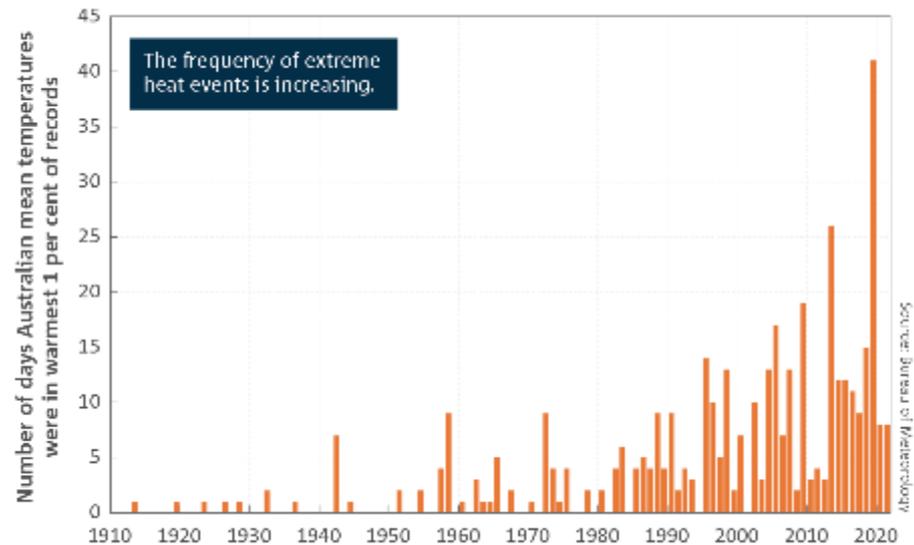
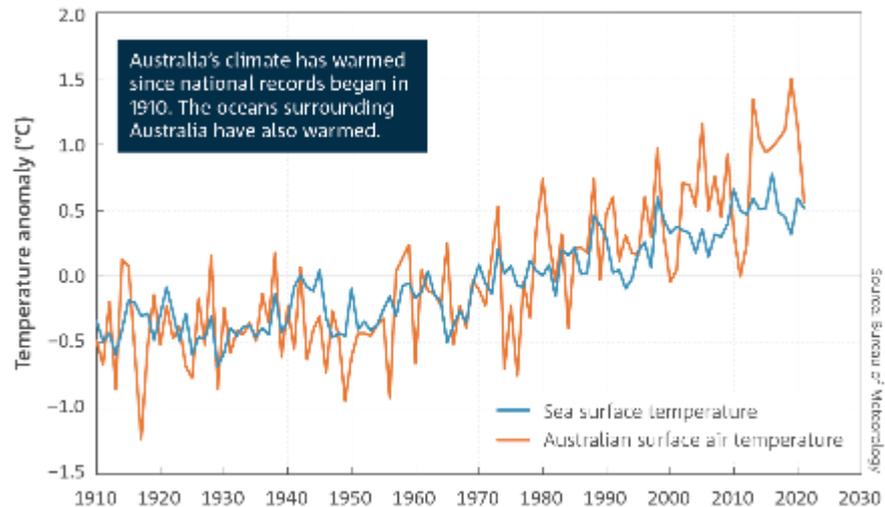


BUILDINGS DESTROYED

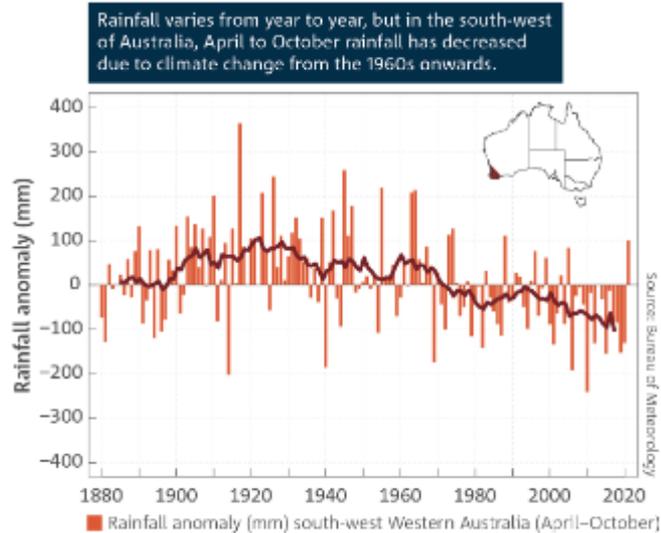
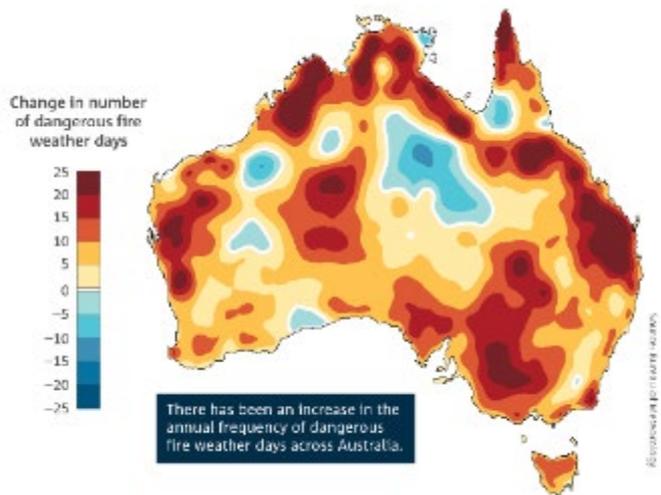
ABC NEWS

Around 200 residences are in evacuation centres, as fire fighters try to control the blaze.

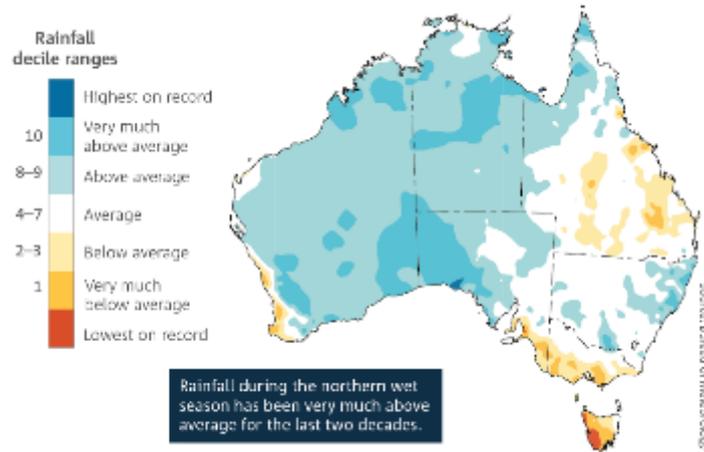




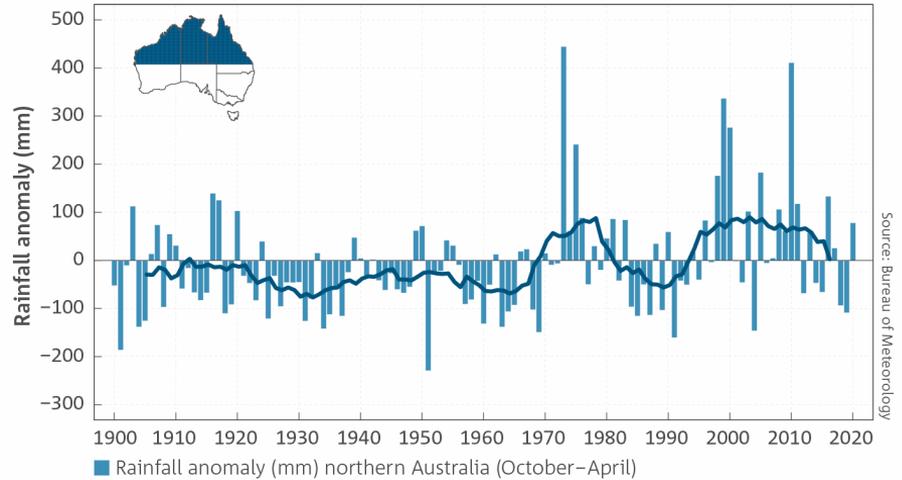
Southern WA – hotter and drier



Northern WA - wetter



Rainfall during the northern wet season varies from year to year. There have been more wetter than average years in recent decades.



Port Beach, Fremantle



Kewdale factory fire



Quick activity

3 minutes

Fill out the table

No right or wrong answer

Activity Table

	Bushfire Affecting Asbestos Houses	Major Flood
Prevention & Preparedness		
Response		
Recovery		

Prevention & Preparedness

Bushfire affecting asbestos houses	Major flood
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practicing the response• Relationship building• PPE check<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Works○ In date• Danger tape• Legislation knowledge• SOP knowledge• Templates for notices etc• Education with community• Contacts including traffic management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practicing the response• Relationship building• Input into EM planning & practice• Input into Town Planning decisions• ID populations & areas most at risk• Knowledge of flood plain characteristics• Knowledge of resources and where to access information

Response

Bushfire affecting asbestos houses	Major flood
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Will probably be responded to by DFES or local fire brigade</i>• Noting information that the incident has occurred• Determine smoke impacts• Media comms• Responding to calls from public• Providing storm water drainage information• Knowing vulnerable populations• Don't become part of the emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide information to responders• Liaising with response agencies• Liaising with State Emergency Management Coordination Group• Conduit to local government• Good knowledge of area

Recovery

Bushfire affecting asbestos houses	Major flood
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Onsite inspections and investigations (safety first)• Risk communication• Evidence gathering<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Photos○ Samples• Determining extent of contamination• Issue notices to appropriate people• Follow up verification of remediation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk communication• Providing assessment and information to recovery committee and community• Mould• Water safety – drinking, waste, environmental• Sanitation - landfill capacity and waste acceptance criteria, waste collection• Accommodation• Remote communities• Food safety• Mosquito-borne disease

Environmental health priorities – emergency incidents



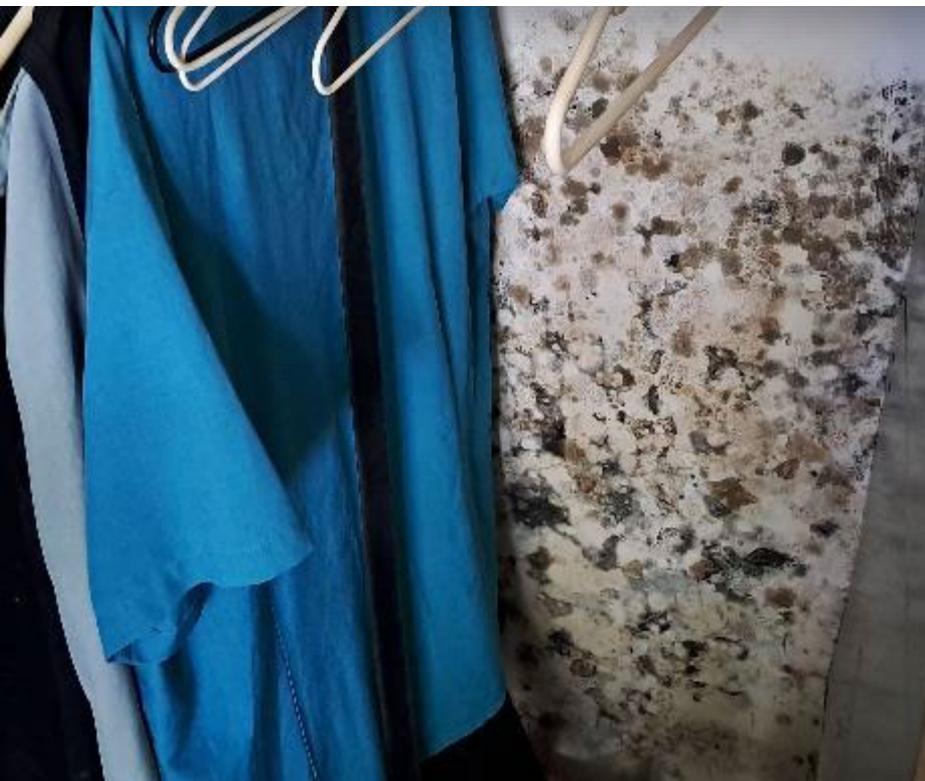
Asbestos



Toxic smoke and ash



Mould



Vector-borne disease



HealthyWA
Sponsored

After flooding 🚨 Mosquito bites can make you sick – remember to protect yourself with repellent and long, loose-fitting clothing 🦟

Department of Health
WA Country Health Service

Fight the bite

Keep yourself safe from mosquito-borne diseases

- Avoid outdoor exposure where possible
- Wear protective clothing (long and loose-fitting)
- Ensure insect screens are working on houses and caravans
- Keep children protected with suitable clothing and bed nets

healthywa.wa.gov.au
After floods | Mosquitoes
After a cyclone or floodin...

Learn more

Accommodation



Sanitation



Drinking water



Wastewater



Environmental waters



Food



Environmental health considerations

Preparedness	Response	Recovery
Emergency management plans	Risk communication and community engagement	Risk communication and community engagement
Risk assessment and profiling	Local knowledge	Chemical hazards
Training	Equipment and resources	Biological hazards
Exercises	Rapid risk assessment	Food safety
Relationship building		Aboriginal environmental health
Administration		Water – drinking, environmental, waste
Horizon scanning - monitoring information		Applied environmental health eg mould, accommodation

Technical skills



Water and
wastewater



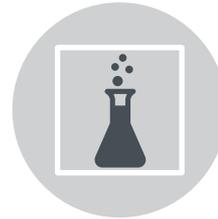
Aboriginal
environmental
health



Food safety



Biological and applied
environmental health
hazards

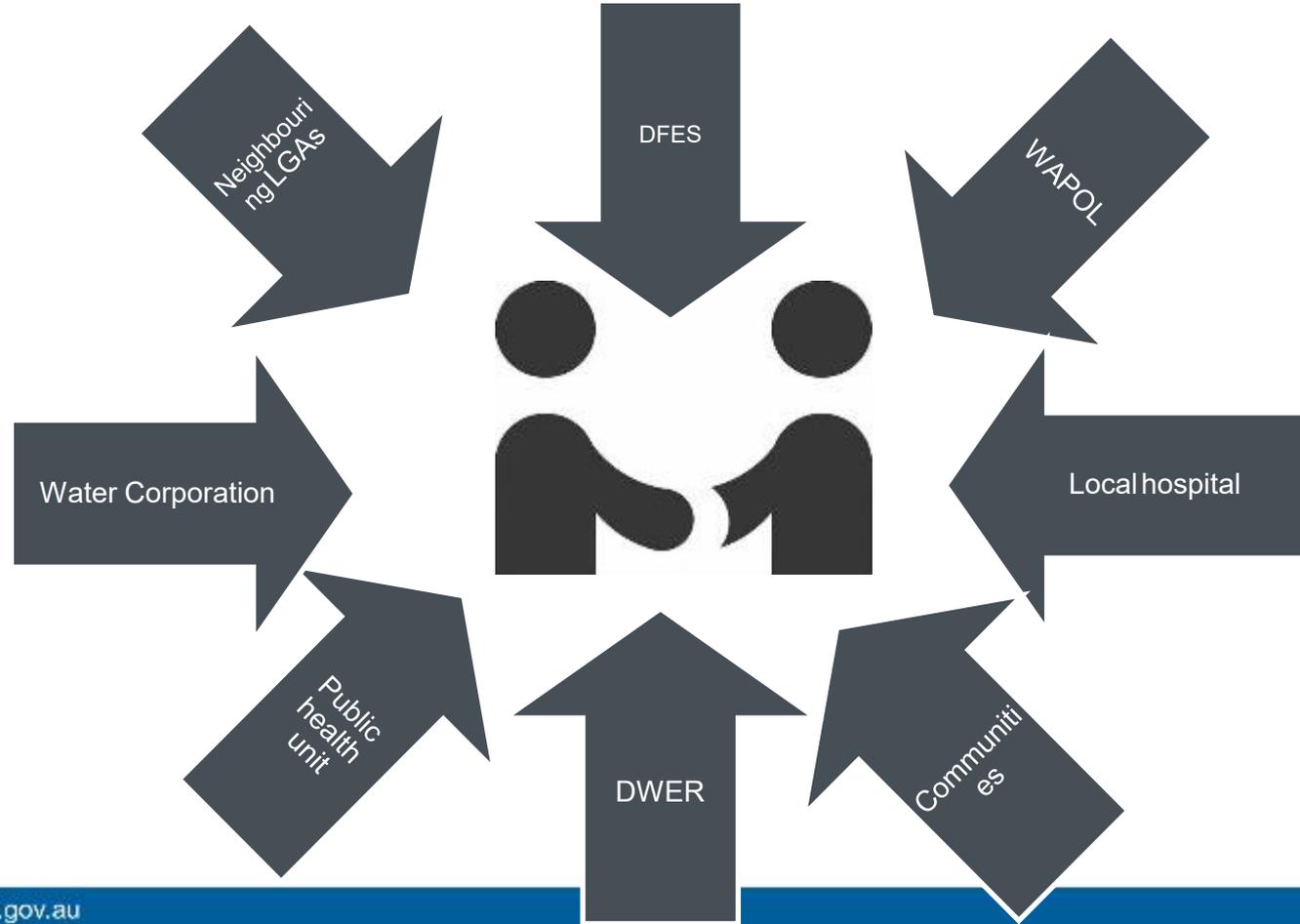


Chemical hazards

Local knowledge

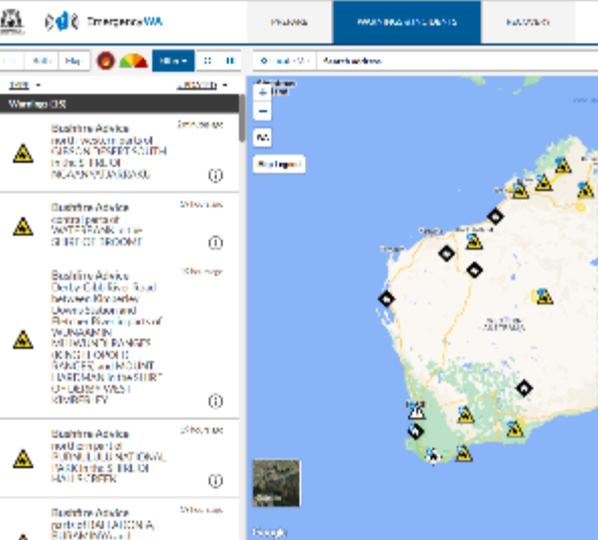
- Location of infrastructure
- Road conditions and access
- Characteristics of the affected community
- Key personnel
- Resources available within your organisation

Relationships



Equipment and resources

- Emergency grab kit
- Vehicles (including 4WDs if necessary)
- Computers/devices
- Contact lists for key personnel
- Communications – mobile phones, two way radios
- PPE
- Health warning signage
- First aid kits
- Sampling equipment – food, water, asbestos



Emergency WA website

Home - Emergency WA Warnings & Incidents



BOM website

Australia's official weather forecasts & weather radar – Bureau of Meteorology (bom.gov.au)

- Emergency management plans
- Authorisations
- Legislation
- WHS



Training

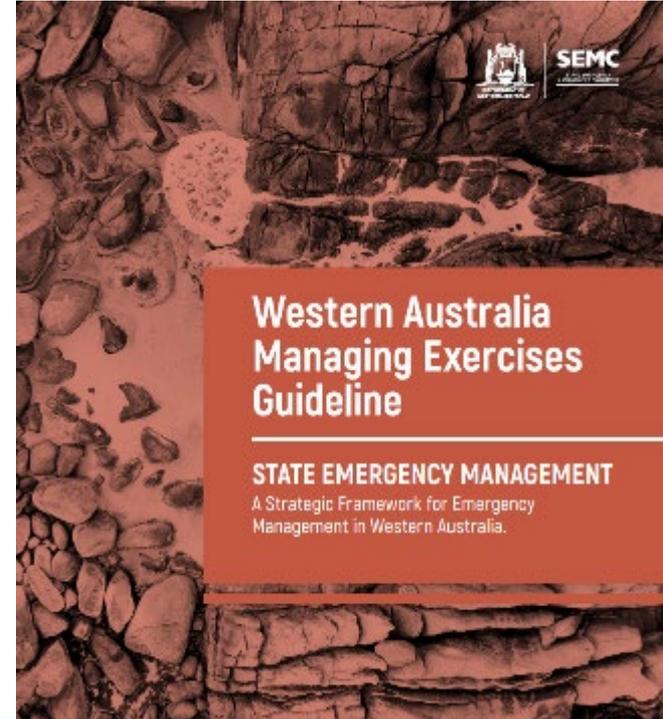
- Environmental Health Directorate (DoH)
 - [Environmental Health events, training and webinars](#)
 - Subscribe to the monthly environmental health e-News: [Environmental Health Directorate, Department of Health WA \(list-manage.com\)](#)
- Disaster Preparedness and Management Directorate (DoH)
 - [Disaster management training and development \(health.wa.gov.au\)](#)
- WALGA
 - [Training | WALGA | WALGA](#)
 - Subscribe to monthly emergency management newsletter: [WALGA \(list-manage.com\)](#)

Training

- State Emergency Management Committee
 - [Learn how to run emergency management exercises \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)
- Emergency Management Victoria
 - [Learning and Development | Emergency Management Victoria \(emv.vic.gov.au\)](http://emv.vic.gov.au) In-person and online options
- University of Melbourne – Foundations in Disaster Recovery (Short Course)
 - [Foundations in Disaster Recovery \(unimelb.edu.au\)](http://unimelb.edu.au) – online and optional in-person

Exercises

[Western Australia Managing Exercises Guideline](#)
[\(www.wa.gov.au\)](#)



Reassess yourself

- How do you feel about your preparedness for an emergency situation?
- 1 to 5
- Is it different than the beginning?

Take away self assessment