



Australian Government

AUSASSISTPLAN 2018

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
OVERSEAS ASSISTANCE PLAN**

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CONTENT SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS

Capability Owners – refers to parent agencies or organisations of a deployable capability, this can include private providers.

Command – is providing direction within a capability, typically within existing organisational structure, such as within an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team or an Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT).

Control – is providing overall direction across capabilities within the mission to ensure outcomes are met.

Coordination – is providing the functions across a mission to ensure the mission outcomes are met.

Emergency Management Australia Liaison Officer (EMALO) – is the EMA deployed officer responsible for the domestic logistical and administrative support to the deployed team. The EMALO also develops plans and arrangements to support the safety and security of the deployed team.

Head of Mission (HoM) – is the senior Australian Government representative in any foreign country. When the Australian Government is involved in disaster response, the HoM or an appropriate delegate will lead the response in-country.

Mission – is the operational activity completing a tasking. Multiple missions may be undertaken to a single country, should the breadth of tasks require such a response.

Mission Coordination Team – deployed Commonwealth officers who work to the Mission Coordinator to ensure the ongoing operation of the technical taskforce is consistent with the mission objective, is meeting Australian Government intent and expectations, and is in line with Australian Government response and the deployed capability has appropriate tasking and support from the Australian Government.

Mission Coordinator – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), or the DFAT appointed officer, responsible to the HoM for the overall coordination of deployed teams, including adherence to mission objectives.

Physical Assistance – refers to the provision of state based technical capabilities.

Tasking – is provided by DFAT to EMA to organise the resources for a mission in accordance with this Plan and the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF).

Task Request – is issued by EMA to jurisdictions or Australian Government agencies to provide a capability. The capability is then known as a *tasked capability*.

Technical Team – a state or territory based USAR, an AUSMAT or other teams established for potential deployment under this plan. A team may consist of a single person.

AUTHORITY

The Australian Government Overseas Assistance Plan (AUSASSISTPLAN) is prepared and maintained by Emergency Management Australia (EMA) for the provision of Australian Government organised physical assistance to overseas countries following a disaster.

AUSASSISTPLAN 2015 supersedes all previous versions.

AUSASSISTPLAN 2015 was endorsed by Director General Emergency Management Australia (DGEMA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Humanitarian Division, and approved by the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department on *1 September 2015*.



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Jamie Isbister
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AMENDMENTS

Recommendations for amendments or suggestions for improvement may be forwarded to:

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PO Box 25 Belconnen ACT 2616

VERSION DETAIL

In December 2017 AUSASSISTPLAN underwent an administrative review to reflect Machinery of Government changes. AUSASSISTPLAN 2017 supersedes all previous versions and has been endorsed by DGEMA on 20 December 2017.

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE

- 1.1.1. AUSASSISTPLAN applies only for the provision of emergency Australian Government organised physical assistance to overseas countries.
- 1.1.2. The plan does not address the evacuation or repatriation of Australian citizens and approved foreign nationals from an overseas location, nor direct consular services in an overseas location. Separate plans cover these arrangements.

1.2. AIM

- 1.2.1. AUSASSISTPLAN details the process for the provision of emergency Australian Government led physical assistance to overseas countries.

1.3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.3.1. Assistance is not provided by the Australian Government unless assistance has been requested and/or accepted by the government of the disaster affected country.
- 1.3.2. The provision of emergency Australian Government led physical assistance to overseas countries will be dependent on domestic requirements and capacity at the time. Emergency Management Australia (EMA) will work with jurisdictions and capability owners to determine the ability and capacity to deploy a technical team offshore.
- 1.3.3. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) leads and coordinates the whole-of-government response to an international crisis that has affected, or threatens to affect, Australians or Australian interests overseas; and leads and coordinates the whole-of-government response to an international humanitarian crisis.
- 1.3.4. In some circumstances, DFAT may delegate its roles and responsibilities under this plan to another agency.
- 1.3.5. In the case of multiple components to a response, the requesting government's priorities will be respected as far as possible or practical. Where priorities are not stated, the preservation and safety of life will be the primary priority.
- 1.3.6. All assistance will be regularly assessed to ensure that the approved objectives are being met and/or whether the objectives require modification to meet changing circumstances in the emergency response environment.
- 1.3.7. DFAT and EMA agree to undertake collaborative training and exercise opportunities where possible to maintain a thorough understanding of agency roles and responsibilities under AUSASSISTPLAN.
- 1.3.8. AUSASSISTPLAN is consistent with the *Australian Government Crisis Management Framework* (AGCMF). The AGCMF outlines the responsibilities for leading and funding the provision of immediate emergency assistance to overseas countries.
- 1.3.9. AUSASSISTPLAN should be read in conjunction with the *International Emergency Deployment Guidelines* and the *Guide for Financial Reimbursement*, which provide additional detail on specific arrangements.

1.4. OVERVIEW

- 1.4.1. AUSASSISTPLAN has three (3) phases; STANDBY, ALERT, and ACTIVE.
- 1.4.2. Based on a request from DFAT, Director General EMA (DGEMA) will authorise a phase change between STANDBY and ALERT.
- 1.4.3. DGEMA will authorise a phase change from ALERT to ACTIVE following authorisation from DFAT and a tasking being issued to and accepted by EMA.
- 1.4.4. DFAT (or an agency defined under 1.3.4) when requesting action under this plan is responsible for the direct costs incurred.
- 1.4.5. EMA will consult with capability owners to identify the most appropriate and cost effective assistance, in line with DFAT requirements.
- 1.4.6. Following a tasking being issued, EMA will work with the identified capability to coordinate movement and ensure delivery of the capability within Australia as outlined in the tasking.
- 1.4.7. Agencies are not authorised to incur expenditure on behalf of the Australian Government until the receipt and acceptance of a task request from EMA. Expenditure incurred without a task request will not be eligible for reimbursement from the Australian Government. All reimbursable expenditure must be claimed in the appropriate timeframe and in accordance with the current *Guide for Financial Reimbursement*.
- 1.4.8. While the tasked capability is in the affected country, the capability is under the control of the Head of Mission (HoM) or appointed delegate.
- 1.4.9. Whilst deployed, all members of the capability are considered as bona-fide Australian Government officers and are subject to the rules and conditions of employment of Australian Government officers. Advice on the rights and responsibilities of deployed personnel is contained in the *International Emergency Deployment Guidelines*.
- 1.4.10. The safety and security of all personnel deployed under AUSASSISTPLAN is paramount. State or territory government personnel deployed under this plan are considered employees of the Australian Government as per the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Definition of Employee) Notice 2009 (1) for the purposes of subsection 5(6) of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*.
- 1.4.11. EMA will advise relevant Australian Government agencies, jurisdictions and tasked capabilities when ACTIVE phase is complete and AUSASSISTPLAN reverts to STANDBY.

SECTION 2 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. OVERVIEW

2.1.1. This section details the roles and responsibilities of Australian Government and state and territory agencies for the provision of support under AUSASSISTPLAN.

2.2. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA (EMA)

- 2.2.1. Activate AUSASSISTPLAN, inform stakeholders and notify of phase changes to the Plan.
- 2.2.2. Based on a request from DFAT, engage with capability owners to develop appropriate response options in line with the mission objectives for consideration by DFAT.
- 2.2.3. Activate a Crisis Coordination Team (CCT) to facilitate EMA's role in the event and undertake planning with other relevant stakeholders.
- 2.2.4. Provide ongoing situational reporting to DFAT as lead agency.
- 2.2.5. Provide a central point of contact between jurisdictions and deployed resources.
- 2.2.6. Deploy an Emergency Management Australia Liaison Officer (EMALO) for in-country support of the deployed capability as part of the Mission Coordination Team (MCT).
- 2.2.7. Coordinate domestic travel arrangements for the tasked capabilities. EMA can also coordinate international travel arrangements if requested by DFAT.
- 2.2.8. Ensure personnel and cargo manifest details for entry/access purposes are prepared by the tasked capability and provided, in advance of departure from Australia, and, as appropriate, for customs and immigration purposes.
- 2.2.9. Exercise duty of care for deployed capability personnel and report any in-country Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) issues to the MCT.
- 2.2.10. Develop safety and security plans in-country for consideration by the MCT.
- 2.2.11. Coordinate with Immigration and Border Protection – Department of Home Affairs to ensure export and import requirements for the deploying equipment are met.
- 2.2.12. Contribute to situation reports on the performance and sustainment of the deployed team, including any issues arising.
- 2.2.13. Manage/facilitate demobilisation, including the return of approved resources to jurisdictions.
- 2.2.14. Manage and provide to DFAT financial claims and reporting.
- 2.2.15. Manage post event reporting, including evaluation and collation of debriefs for capabilities.

2.3. DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT)

- 2.3.1. Upon approval from the Minister of Foreign Affairs or an approved delegate, request DGEMA to activate AUSASSISTPLAN.
- 2.3.2. Lead and coordinate the whole-of-government response to an international crisis. The HoM is the senior Australian Government representative in any foreign country. When the Australian Government is involved in disaster response, the HoM or an appropriate delegate will lead the response in-country and consult and receive direction as necessary from Canberra.
- 2.3.3. Liaise with relevant government authorities in-country, provide advice on affected government requirements and updated information (including from early reconnaissance missions).
- 2.3.4. Provide the Australian Government with advice on emerging issues or disasters in-country.
- 2.3.5. Develop the requirements for the technical teams.
- 2.3.6. In line with the proposed tasking of a capability, obtain, clarify and detail the authority for an Australian Government response including any operating restrictions.
- 2.3.7. In line with the AGCMF, lead Interdepartmental Emergency Taskforces (IDETF).
- 2.3.8. Arrange Third Person Notes and authorities as required.
- 2.3.9. Provide situational reporting as required to the IDETF and relevant Australian Government and state and territory departments and agencies.
- 2.3.10. Provide to EMA tasking documentation, financial limits and the scope of requirement(s) for the deployment/s.
- 2.3.11. Appoint a Mission Coordinator to coordinate Australian Government activities in-country.
- 2.3.12. Coordinate the Australian in-country response.
- 2.3.13. Coordinate in-country logistics for deployed personnel as agreed in the tasking.
- 2.3.14. Produce and distribute whole-of-government talking points and media releases for the response.
- 2.3.15. Conduct donor coordination (including information on the response of other donors and to inform other donors of Australia's response).
- 2.3.16. Conduct an end-of-deployment evaluation and lessons learned activity and participate in those events conducted by other parties.

2.4. OTHER AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND AUSTRALIAN JURISDICTIONAL AGENCIES

- 2.4.1. Capability owners may choose to accept tasking to achieve the outcomes and activities authorised under this plan.
- 2.4.2. Capability owners are to ensure personnel deployed are medically fit, immunised and prepared for the deployment in line with the *International Emergency Deployment Guidelines*.

- 2.4.3. EMA will work with capability owners to ensure the suitability and qualification of resources provided towards tasked activities.
- 2.4.4. Relevant agencies will develop internal arrangements in support of AUSASSISTPLAN.
- 2.4.5. Other Australian Government agencies may assist the mission as required.

2.5. PERSONNEL DEPLOYED UNDER THIS PLAN

- 2.5.1. Personnel deployed under this plan are considered employees of the Commonwealth for the purposes of subsection 5(6) of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*. This requires deployed persons to act within the guidelines referenced by this Plan.
- 2.5.2. Personnel will follow the appropriate behavioural standards under the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and any additional agency standards. This will include adhering to the *DFAT Child Protection Policy*.
- 2.5.3. Personnel are to be physically and psychologically fit for deployment. If a member is aware of an issue that may impact their ability to fulfil their role they must make the capability owner aware of the issue.
- 2.5.4. Refer to the *International Emergency Deployment Guidelines* for details of additional requirements for deployed personnel.

SECTION 3 – RESPONSE

3.1. OVERVIEW

- 3.1.1. AUSASSISTPLAN consists of three phases:
 - **STANDBY** (monitor and prepare)
 - **ALERT** (enhanced preparations)
 - **ACTIVE** (responding to known impact)
- 3.1.2. STANDBY is the default phase of AUSASSISTPLAN.
- 3.1.3. Based on a request from DFAT, DGEMA will authorise a phase change between STANDBY and ALERT.
- 3.1.4. DGEMA will authorise a phase change to ACTIVE following authorisation and tasking from DFAT.
- 3.1.5. The Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC) will advise all stakeholders on AUSASSISTPLAN phase changes.
- 3.1.6. A tasking request may be issued to a capability prior to a formal phase change to Alert, in order to expedite the deployment of a capability. The CCC will subsequently issue a tasking request.

3.2. PLAN PHASES AND ACTIVITIES

3.2.1. STANDBY

- 3.2.1.1. AUSASSISTPLAN is maintained in STANDBY phase as the default condition.

- 3.2.1.2. In STANDBY, capabilities maintain a readiness level for deployment.
- 3.2.1.3. Under STANDBY the following activities are undertaken:
- 3.2.1.4. DFAT and EMA will:
 - Monitor potential situations.
 - Plan for potential responses.
 - Undertake training and exercises.
- 3.2.1.5. Capability owners will:
 - Advise EMA of any change in conditions that may affect their ability to deploy.
 - Undertake training and exercises.

3.2.2. ALERT

- 3.2.2.1. ALERT phase is declared when a response is likely and it allows for capabilities to be brought to an enhanced level of preparedness.
- 3.2.2.2. Based on a request from DFAT, DGEMA will authorise a phase change to ALERT.
- 3.2.2.3. Under ALERT the following activities are undertaken:
- 3.2.2.4. DFAT will:
 - Work with whole of government partners (Defence, Health, EMA) to develop implementation plans, determine timings and consider constraints.
 - Provide EMA with advice on the extent of the activities authorised and the financial delegation under this phase.
- 3.2.2.5. EMA will:
 - Provide relevant information to Australian and state and territory government departments and agencies.
 - Provide a tasking request to jurisdictions/agencies, including agreed authorisation to expend Australian Government funds.
 - With jurisdictions/agencies, undertake tasking and provide regular situation updates on the agreed basis.
- 3.2.2.6. Tasked capabilities will:
 - Advise EMA of acceptance of the task request, including acceptance of the financial arrangements as outlined in the *Guide for Financial Reimbursement*.
 - Provide advice on capability and understanding of the task request.
- 3.2.2.7. ALERT phase automatically reverts to STANDBY phase after 72 hours unless advised otherwise.

3.2.3. ACTIVE:

- 3.2.3.1. ACTIVE phase is declared where an event has occurred and AUSASSISTPLAN action has been authorised. This phase may be declared prior to all

arrangements for the transportation or acceptance of Australian Government assistance has been finalised, in the interests of expediting a response.

- 3.2.3.2. ACTIVE phase is initiated when DFAT provides written tasking to EMA to mobilise the tasked capability to the Australian point of international departure ready for the mission. This tasking will set out the extent of the activities authorised and the financial delegation under this phase.
- 3.2.3.3. Additional mobilisation of stores or personnel from a tasked capability will require a new tasking order.
- 3.2.3.4. Under ACTIVE the following activities are undertaken:
- 3.2.3.5. DFAT will:
- Deploy a MCT (including a Mission Coordination Team Leader).
 - Provide approval, if required, for tasked capabilities travel to 'Reconsider your need to travel' or 'Do not travel' destinations.
 - Brief the tasked capability on the mission objectives, DFAT's safety and security procedures, media strategy and procedures, cultural context and other issues as required.
 - Obtain all necessary clearances and authorities to practice from the affected government.
 - Assume responsibility for the tasked capability upon arrival at the international point of departure.
 - Maintain control of tasked capability during the deployment in-country.
 - In conjunction with EMA, develop and approve the demobilisation plan and advise tasked capability.
 - Manage the withdrawal of field operations in accordance with operational requirements and government priorities.
 - Manage the gifting of equipment and supplies as appropriate.
 - Identify and confirm when the ACTIVE phase for a capability is complete.
 - Provide situational reporting as required.
- 3.2.3.6. EMA will:
- Notify relevant Australian and state and territory government departments and agencies of ACTIVE Phase.
 - Deploy an EMALO to form part of the MCT.
 - Provide a tasking request to jurisdictions/agencies, including agreed authorisation to expend Australian Government funds.
 - Organise and confirm domestic travel arrangements for personnel and cache to the agreed point of departure, and point of arrival upon return to Australia.
 - Ensure that all Australian customs and immigration processes have been finalised and approved prior to deployment.
 - Assist DFAT with the development of rotation and demobilisation plans.

- Contribute to situation reports.
- Ensure arrangements, including customs, quarantine and immigration are in place for the return of the tasked capability and cache to Australia and an agreed location.
- Develop a safety and security plan in-country for consideration by DFAT.
- Undertake hot debrief in field prior to return to Australia.
- Advise relevant Australian Government agencies, jurisdictions and tasked capabilities when ACTIVE Phase is complete and AUSASSISTPLAN reverts to STANDBY.
- Undertake reporting and financial resolution in the agreed format and timeframe based on the *Guide for Financial Reimbursement*.

3.2.3.7. Tasked capabilities will:

- Advise EMA of acceptance of the task request, including acceptance of the financial arrangements as outlined in the *Guide for Financial Reimbursement* and provide advice on capability when requested.
- As required, provide a liaison officer to the most appropriate operations or coordination centre.
- Work in conjunction with DFAT to achieve the outcomes agreed in the tasking request.
- Undertake the mission under the control of the MCT Leader, consistent with the tasking and the operations plan or response option. While a full operations plan may not be available prior to deployment, it will be developed in conjunction with the tasked capability on a situational basis.
- Provide reporting on operational activities as required.
- Withdraw from field operations in line with DFAT direction.
- Contribute to debriefs and lessons learnt activities.
- Meet financial and reporting requirements and deadlines.

3.2.3.8. Based on advice from DFAT and upon completion of all tasks, DGEMA will authorise AUSASSISTPLAN to revert to STANDBY.

3.3. COMMAND, CONTROL AND COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.3.1. The MCT is made up of the Mission Coordinator, EMALO, and other relevant officers as required.
- 3.3.2. DFAT, through HoM, will provide mission direction to the MCT to ensure that mission outcomes are met.
- 3.3.3. The MCT ensures the response meets the Australian Government intent and expectations and that the deployed resource has appropriate tasking and support from the Australian Government in-country.
- 3.3.4. Coordination and control of a deployed capability is managed by the MCT.
- 3.3.5. Command remains with the team leaders of the deployed capabilities.

SECTION 4 – FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1. Response options developed by EMA will include cost estimates for the deployable capability, including extraordinary Australian Government costs associated with the deployment.
- 4.2. A copy of the *Guide for Financial Reimbursement* will be sent with the formal task request. It is the responsibility of the tasked agency to ensure that claims are in line with the Guide.
- 4.3. Financial arrangements for state or territory agencies will be detailed in the formal task request sent to them from the CCC. Generally, the purchase of assets and equipment where the life of the item extends beyond the current operation will be ineligible for reimbursement. Any ambiguity relating to costs should be clarified prior to acceptance of a task.
- 4.4. The *Guide for Financial Reimbursement* details the arrangements for making a claim on the Australian Government, following the completion of a tasking under an Australian Government plan.

SECTION 5 – GIFTING AND DISCARDING ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1. DFAT will authorise items to be gifted or discarded.
- 5.2. The *Guide for Financial Reimbursement* details the process and the arrangements for financial reimbursement of gifted and discarded items.

SECTION 6 – MEDIA AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.1. DFAT is responsible for the overall media and communications strategy and will authorise appropriate spokespeople.
- 6.2. DFAT is responsible for coordinating and distributing public communications and talking points.
- 6.3. Where appropriate, and by agreement with DFAT, the CCC will provide DFAT products to states and territories and implement additional Australian domestic public communications to support jurisdictional-based requirements.

SECTION 7 – ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

AUSASSISTPLAN should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- *Australian Government Crisis Management Framework*
- *Guide for Financial Reimbursement – Australian Government Overseas Deployments*
- *Emergency Management Australia – International Emergency Deployment Guidelines*
- *APS Code of Conduct*.