Australian Government
Guiding Principles for Civil-Military-Police Interaction in International Disaster and Conflict Management
Introduction

The Australian Government’s Guiding Principles for Civil-Military-Police Interaction in International Disaster and Conflict Management (the Guiding Principles) has been developed by the Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC) in collaboration with the departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), Defence (ADF), Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Attorney-General’s (AGD), the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). The Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Treasury have also reviewed and contributed to the Guiding Principles.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline five strategic principles, agreed at working and senior levels across government, to inform policy and planning for international disaster and conflict management.

The Guiding Principles does not seek to replace current multiagency or single agency documents and policies. It aims to provide common strategic imperatives to improve the effectiveness of whole-of-government collaboration in a multiagency environment. The Guiding Principles is designed to build on the unique capabilities of all stakeholders.

The agreed principles are:

- Clearly define strategic objectives and operational roles and responsibilities
- Engage proactively
- Share knowledge and understanding
- Leverage organisational diversity
- Commit to continuous improvement.

1 For the purposes of this document ‘interagency’ represents stakeholders within government, while ‘multiagency’ includes the broader non-government community.
Background

Australia’s experience in responding to disasters and conflicts overseas has developed significantly over the past 15 years. Complex disasters and conflicts in Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and the Solomon Islands have reinforced the value of a whole-of-government approach to solving multifaceted crises. More recently, the Australian Government’s responses to the search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 and the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 have highlighted Australia’s strengths in multiagency and multinational settings.

As a result of this experience, Australian government agencies have made significant efforts to develop and maintain a collaborative culture and enhance coordination among stakeholders, including with affected states/communities, the aid community, the private sector, international partners, and state and territory governments. Given the changing nature of conflict, globalisation, climate change and the advent of new and emerging technologies, continued collaboration across a growing number of actors will be paramount if we are to prevent conflict and reduce the effects of disasters overseas.

A successful whole-of-government approach is best achieved through a collaborative culture, which recognises the unique capabilities of individual agencies despite different practices and approaches to develop, plan and implement coordinated response efforts.

This document seeks to complement the significant work done to date by reaffirming the principles that guide the Australian Government and its stakeholders in international multiagency response efforts. It also seeks to institutionalise the best of the learning that has come from the Australian experience.

The Guiding Principles is intended for policy makers and a range of stakeholders engaged in disaster and conflict response. They are designed to strengthen Australia’s whole-of-government commitment to achieving shared objectives and delivering effective and sustainable outcomes.

Collaborative whole-of-government efforts will be realised by reinforcing the Guiding Principles through multiagency exercises, training and education, practical research and lessons programs. The Guiding Principles is designed to be enduring in nature; however, this document will need periodic review to reflect maturing whole-of-government approaches, and as lessons from operations and exercises identify areas for improvement.
Effective international conflict and disaster management

Effective international conflict and disaster management strategies require the support and deployment (as required) of multiagency professionals who are sensitive to the complex needs of affected societies, communities and individuals. Understanding individual agencies’ technical expertise, roles and responsibilities is crucial to enhancing collaboration and harnessing the strengths of each agency. The roles and responsibilities of Australian government agencies and other stakeholders in response to international crises are shown in Annex A. The roles and responsibilities of non-government stakeholders are shown in Annex B.

The diagram below illustrates how active employment of the Guiding Principles in civil-military-police coordination before, during and after crises will achieve effective outcomes. The diagram represents Australian government and non-government stakeholders’ involvement in responding to international disasters and conflicts.
The Guiding Principles

Stakeholders have agreed on a principles-based approach as the best way to build a culture of collaboration and to maximise effective outcomes in a multiagency environment. The Guiding Principles reinforces the need for collaboration before, during and after responses to international crises. The principles have been developed to encourage a cohesive approach to decision making, planning, implementation, the delivery of comprehensive and sustainable outcomes, and lessons capture.

Whole-of-government leadership will drive the implementation of the Guiding Principles as an underlying framework for multiagency efforts. Agency leaders will work to incorporate the Guiding Principles in strategic planning and embed a collaborative culture across government and non-government organisations.

The five principles, presented in priority order, interact to contribute to the common goal of achieving sustainable outcomes through collaborative planning, appropriate resourcing and timely responses. An integrated, flexible, whole-of-government approach will lead to successful civil-military-police interaction.

Commitment to and implementation of the Guiding Principles will be reviewed regularly by the ACMC Strategic Advisory Panel, to continue to build Australia’s whole-of-government capability.

1. CLEARLY DEFINE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND OPERATIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This principle encourages organisations to align their operational objectives with strategic government priorities, while understanding the interdependency of actions. International disaster and conflict management involves a dynamic and rapidly evolving decision-making process. It is imperative that stakeholders share an understanding of the strategic issues, the resources available, possible options and potential consequences.

From the outset, government agencies should adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach, with all likely stakeholders involved in planning. Strategic objectives and clearly defined roles and responsibilities should be built on inclusive discussion that represents the leadership and command structures distinctive to civil, military and police organisations.

2. ENGAGE PROACTIVELY

Alignment of purpose and cohesion of effort are best achieved through a proactive approach, marshalling necessary expertise from a range of diverse organisations. Liaison officers and interagency secondment programs support integrated planning, increase awareness of stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and foster an environment of understanding and collegiality. Building networks between individuals and organisations at all levels promotes institutional familiarity, trust and transparency.

Proactive engagement in civil-military-police education, training and exercises contributes to an organisation’s preparedness, and improves capacity to work effectively with other agencies.

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2 The ACMC Strategic Advisory Panel includes Band 3/3 Star representatives from PM&C, ADF, DFAT, AGD and AFP.

3 It is important to note that the ADF’s command and control structures and the AFP’s command structures are defined within specific legislation. Command is the legal authority to order subordinates towards assigned tasks and cannot be delegated to individuals outside the legislated chain of command.
Organisations differ in their knowledge management and communication cultures. Nevertheless, stakeholders accept that sharing knowledge in a multiagency environment clarifies strategies, mechanisms, cultural differences and complementary areas.

Information to support multiagency activities comes from a range of sources, including government departments, Australian embassies or consulates in affected countries, the United Nations (and its agencies, funds and programs), non-government organisations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, host governments, bureaucratic agencies, civil society and academia.

An effective information sharing and communication strategy is essential to support information transfer across agencies. Strategies to share information include effective communication and information plans, multiagency exercises and collaborative training opportunities. Transferring appropriate information across organisations and information technology systems achieves optimal outcomes while maintaining the integrity of classified information. Enhanced understanding of information management processes contributes to information interoperability, and ultimately to the success of common goals.

Effective whole-of-government outcomes are delivered through the diverse cultures, perceptions, values, technical and professional expertise of organisations and individuals. Exploiting the range of organisational capabilities strengthens combined ability to assess, plan, respond and execute complex operations. Whole-of-government outcomes are enhanced while retaining the cultural and professional diversity that defines organisations.

Capturing and communicating whole-of-government lessons is essential to effective multiagency capability and improves Australia’s response to disasters and conflicts. Recent findings in ACMC’s reports on Australia’s response to Afghanistan, the search for Malaysia Airline Flights MH370 and the downing of MH17 have highlighted the value of identifying lessons at the strategic level. Organisational learning and continuous improvement is supported through the integration of lessons into planning, training, exercises and policies.
Conclusion

The agreed principles provide the framework to improve Australian civil-military-police preparedness in preventing, responding to and supporting recovery from international disasters and conflicts. The Guiding Principles strengthens collaboration at the strategic level and assists Australian decision makers, planners and managers in delivering effective operational outcomes.

The Guiding Principles is designed to strengthen the Australian whole-of-government commitment to achieving shared objectives and delivering sustainable outcomes. Understanding the principles and putting them into practice involves four key work streams: multiagency exercises; training and education, research and lessons management. The ACMC supports civil-military-police capacity building through these work streams to achieve more efficient and effective whole-of-government outcomes.

The development of the Guiding Principles has demonstrated the willingness of agencies to work collaboratively and to build a common level of understanding across institutional boundaries. The guiding principles will be applied through training, publications, exercises and awareness so that they become embedded in responses to international disasters and conflicts.
 Annex A

Agency roles and responsibilities

Australian Civil-Military Centre

The Australian Civil-Military Centre ACMC is mandated by the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) to ‘support the development of national civil-military capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond more effectively to conflicts and disasters overseas’.

The ACMC works to facilitate cross-agency, civil society and international engagement to support qualitative improvements in Australia’s contributions to humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and peace and stabilisation activities overseas by:

- developing capacity through education, training and exercises
- identifying and advocating best practice in lessons, research and publications
- strengthening national, regional and international engagement through relationship building.

The ACMC does not have an operational role in responding to international disasters and conflicts, but is a service provider to the rest of government. The ACMC exists to serve others and our success is measured by how well Australia mobilises its national effort to promote peace, security and stability overseas in coordination with friends and neighbours. The ACMC leverages relationships across government, international counterparts and civil society organisations. The ACMC collaborates closely with all government agencies to identify lessons and to continually improve Australia’s civil-military-police responses to conflicts and disasters overseas.

The following section provides a brief outline of operational agencies’ roles and responsibilities for international conflict and disaster management.

Role of the Australian Government

Depending on the nature and scale of the international crisis, the Australian Prime Minister may assume primary responsibility for leading the government’s response, including acting as the primary spokesperson. In that event, the Prime Minister may determine whether to convene a meeting of full Cabinet, the NSC or a Prime Ministerial Taskforce (PMTF) to ensure whole-of-government coordination between domains, jurisdictions and with other nations, depending on the needs of the situation.

Leadership of the Australian Government’s response to a crisis will in the first instance be the responsibility of the relevant portfolio minister. However, it is not the role of ministers to manage the operational deployment of agency resources. This is the responsibility of the relevant operational agencies, acting in accordance with ministerial direction, existing contingency plans and statutory obligations.

The NSC

The NSC focuses on major international security issues of strategic importance to Australia, border protection policy, national responses to developing situations (either domestic or international) and classified matters relating to aspects of operation and activities of the Australian Intelligence Community. The NSC is chaired by the Prime Minister and may convene to determine policy, strategy and resources relevant to Australian national security interests and responsibilities.

The Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS) is a senior policy committee that advises the NSC, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C). SCNS meets to coordinate whole-of-government strategic priorities on national security policy issues including matters to be considered by the NSC.
The Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet

As the lead agency in the Australian Public Service, the principal function of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) is to provide high quality policy advice to the Prime Minister and Cabinet on matters that are at the forefront of public and government administration. This includes domestic and international affairs. PM&C also administers certain acts of Parliament, coordinates policy and processes across portfolios (including the Budget process), supports implementation of policy across government and helps Cabinet processes run smoothly. The National Security and International Policy Group, which is headed by an associate secretary, provides advice on Australia’s foreign policy, trade and treaty matters, defence, intelligence, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, law enforcement, information sharing, cyber policy, border security and crisis management.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is the lead agency managing Australia’s international presence. The department works with other government agencies to ensure Australia’s pursuit of its global, regional and bilateral interests is coordinated effectively. When natural disasters or political crises occur offshore, DFAT is responsible for coordinating whole-of-government advice to Cabinet on response options. This involves chairing interdepartmental committees or interdepartmental emergency task forces or groups that are set up to coordinate Australia’s response across agencies. DFAT has a crisis centre equipped with call centre facilities to coordinate crisis first response and to provide a focal point for communication with the media and general public.

DFAT is involved in assisting vulnerable countries to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from international conflicts and disasters. The department also plays a key role in humanitarian and stabilisation efforts through managing Australia’s international aid program. Humanitarian and stabilisation missions invariably take place in the context of a broader international response, often involving the United Nations and other international organisations. DFAT will play a role in facilitating regional/international cooperation around crisis response and seek to ensure that Australia’s efforts are compatible with other international actors and appropriate for a nation of our size, profile and interests.

DFAT also manages the Australian Civilian Corps (ACC). The ACC is a group of experienced Australian specialists drawn from government and the private sector who provide stabilisation and recovery assistance to fragile states and countries that are experiencing or emerging from conflicts or natural disasters. The ACC provides a flexible and timely mechanism for Australia’s response, designed to help bridge the gap between humanitarian and emergency relief and long-term development programs. ACC specialists deploy into Australian, UN, regional or bilateral partner programs or host government ministries on invitation.

Department of Defence

The Department of Defence’s goal is to defend Australia and its national interests. The four principal tasks for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) are: deter and defeat armed attacks on Australia; contribute to stability and security in the South Pacific and Timor-Leste; contribute to military contingencies in the Indo-Pacific region, with priority given to South-East Asia; and contribute to military contingences in support of global security. Australia’s defence policy is founded on the principle of self-reliance in deterring or defeating armed attacks on Australia.

The ADF capacity to deploy rapidly and establish a basic level of security at the outset of a crisis situation will often be an essential element of any comprehensive approach—but it will, in nearly all cases, not be a sufficient response in itself. The nature of the conflict/crisis will also determine if the ADF is the supported or supporting organisation. In some instances other agencies/organisations are better suited to taking the lead, for example the AFP lead in Solomon Islands. Notwithstanding the principal tasks of the ADF, severe natural disasters and extreme weather events place increasing demands on the ADF, in conjunction with
other agencies, to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief assistance. The government’s policy is that Defence will provide a range of specialised capabilities on a scale and of a kind available from no other Australian agency. These capabilities, held at a reduced notice to move, can also be deployed in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief at short notice and in advance of other agencies or NGO. Defence would seek to transition these initial responsibilities to other government agencies/NGOs over time.

The wider Department of Defence supports the ADF mission. The Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) and the Secretary for the Department of Defence jointly manage the Australian Defence Organisation under a ‘diarchy’, which reflects their joint responsibilities and accountabilities to the Australian Government. Strategic decision making by the CDF and the Secretary for Defence is supported directly by Military Strategic Commitments (MSC), Strategic Policy Division (SP Div) and International Policy Division (IP Div). MSC, SP Div and IP Div collectively provide coordinated joint military strategic input and advice to government, other agencies, allies and coalition partners on strategic defence and national security matters.

At the operational level, Headquarters Joint Operations Command plans, controls and conducts military campaigns, operations, joint exercises and other activities to meet Australia’s national objectives in consultation with other government departments and agencies as required. Joint Operations Command commands all military forces when assigned to an operational task. The remainder of the Department of Defence and ADF provide resources to achieve operational and strategic outcomes.

**Attorney-General’s Department**

The Attorney-General’s Department (AGD) is the lead department within the Australian Government with responsibility for Commonwealth emergency management, national security and protective security policy and coordination, including:

- long-term planning and policy development for emergency management, disaster resilience and security
- defining and developing capability for all hazards including counter-terrorism and emergency management issues
- coordinating national security exercises, the evaluation of national security activities, and research and development
- planning for and coordination of operational responses to all hazards through the Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre
- natural disaster relief, recovery and mitigation policy and financial assistance.

AGD also works with countries in the Asia-Pacific region to develop effective laws and practices to combat the challenges of corruption and domestic and transnational crime. This aid-funded work contributes to building more effective governance and the prevention and response to conflict through promoting stability and prosperity in the region.

In the case of overseas deployments, AGD:

- provides legal and policy advice across government on issues involving public international law, including the legal basis for the deployment, the domestic laws of the host state, the application of international humanitarian law where applicable, and relevant human rights norms
- manages relevant emergency management plans (for example AUSASSISTPLAN and AUSRECPLAN) and capabilities to coordinate the deployment of domestic emergency management capabilities as part of an Australian Government response, in cooperation with Australian Government and state and territory emergency management agencies.
Australian Federal Police

The Australian Federal Police’s (AFP) role is to enforce Commonwealth criminal law and to protect Commonwealth and national interests from crime in Australia and overseas. The AFP is Australia’s international law enforcement and policing representative, and the Australian Government’s chief source of advice on policing issues.

The AFP works closely with a range of other law enforcement bodies at state, territory, national and international levels, enhancing safety and contributing to a secure regional and global environment. The AFP has evolved, nationally and offshore, to meet the growing demands of the Australian Government’s law enforcement requirements, emergent threats from the security environment, natural disaster events, and the expectations of communities that the AFP serves.

Consistent with its International Engagement Strategy the AFP undertakes international law enforcement operations, including responses to complex transnational crime and terrorism. In addition, and primarily through its International Deployment Group (IDG), the AFP deploys personnel to police development missions (guided by the IDG Strategic Framework for Police Development) and stability operations on a multinational, regional or bilateral basis. In police development missions AFP personnel are deployed in a range of capacities such as advisers, mentors and trainers. As peacekeepers, AFP personnel may provide assistance in response to international conflict and in support of disaster management. Activities may include community policing, investigations, intelligence, prosecutions, tactical and stability operations, forensic and logistical support.

Joint planning and exercising with other police services and government agencies such as the ADF will continue to form part of the AFP’s strategy for strengthening the effectiveness of the AFP’s response to international conflict and disaster management.

Immigration

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s (DIBP) role is to enhance Australia’s national security, economy and society through effective border protection, targeted temporary and permanent migration, and humanitarian and citizenship programs.

DIBP Australian-based staff are located at 39 posts in 35 countries and DIBP locally engaged staff are located in an additional 14 satellite posts. DIBP also has airline liaison officers strategically located at 11 key international airports who work with airline and airport security groups, as well as colleagues from other countries, to prevent the travel of improperly documented passengers and to facilitate the travel of genuine passengers.

In overseas conflicts and disaster situations, DIBP’s role is to assist, through an overseas and airline liaison officer network, as needed, with the facilitation of uplift of Australian citizens and permanent residents, including those without the necessary travel documentation. In cases where family members of Australian citizens and permanent residents do not hold valid visas to allow for travel to Australia, DIBP will assist with visa options and grant visas as required. DIBP works closely with other government agencies through a whole-of-government approach.

Treasury

Treasury’s role is to provide sound and timely advice to Treasury ministers to assist them make informed decisions on the development and implementation of policies to improve the wellbeing of the Australian people. As a central policy agency, the Treasury is expected to anticipate and analyse policy issues with a whole-of-economy perspective, understand government and stakeholder circumstances, and respond rapidly to changing events and directions.
Treasury provides budget and strategic policy analysis, taking a whole-of-economy perspective, including on national security and natural disaster policy. Treasury is responsible for supporting and providing advice to the Treasurer in his role as a member of the NSC. The Secretary to the Treasury is a member of the SCNS. Treasury works closely with other agencies, including central agencies, to shape fiscally sustainable and effective policies.

**States and territories**

Australia has a federated system of government with significant frontline crisis management capability residing with the states and territories. Where appropriate, the Australian Government calls on the state and territory governments to provide technical experts to support international disaster and conflict management activities. Coordinated through the relevant Commonwealth agency, states and territories regularly provide health, emergency management and policing capabilities to support Australian national response and recovery efforts offshore.
Annex B

Non-government stakeholders’ roles and responsibilities

The following section provides a brief outline of some key operational organisations’ roles and responsibilities for international conflict and disaster management. While these organisations are not part of government, they are nevertheless key stakeholders who influence and have an impact on the Australian Government’s responses to international disasters and conflicts.

United Nations

The United Nations (UN) comprises many agencies, funds and programs with specialised agencies, including World Food Programme (WFP), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

In a disaster response, OCHA is the lead UN department to facilitate the coordination of an international humanitarian response. OCHA has both a humanitarian and civil-military coordination function. Regionally, OCHA coordinates the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), which includes donors, agencies from the aid community, UN agencies and others, and supports host governments to prepare contingency plans, run scenarios and then respond when disaster strikes. After the immediate humanitarian response, the UNDP is the agency usually tasked with coordinating the UN development response.

In situations of conflict or instability, the United Nations will, when called upon by the UN Security Council, authorise peacekeeping missions in countries/regions affected by conflict. These missions often involve a combination of military, political and humanitarian/development objectives to support peacebuilding efforts.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) comprises the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation), and 189 Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (national societies). No part of the Movement is a UN entity or an NGO.

The ICRC, whose mandate is to assist and protect people affected by armed conflict and in other situations of conflict, is given international legal status by the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The ICRC is known for its rigorous adherence to the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality, and it has well-established procedures for operating within conflict zones. Its role includes: promoting international humanitarian law (which governs the conduct of hostilities), protecting civilians, visiting detainees (including prisoners of war), tracing separated and missing family members, and acting as a neutral intermediary.

While the ICRC coordinates and directs international assistance within the Movement at times of armed conflict, the Federation takes on this role following natural and technological disasters in non-conflict situations. The Federation convenes the Shelter Cluster, promotes International Disaster Response Law guidelines, and conducts its relief operations with and through national societies. National societies, which are auxiliaries to their national governments, are made up of members, volunteers and staff whose services include disaster preparedness and response. National societies also send funds, delegates and supplies abroad during natural disasters or conflict situations, under the coordination of the Federation or the ICRC respectively.
Non-government organisations

Non-government organisations (NGOs) are civilian and not-for-profit organisations that may be international, national or local, and some may be faith-based in their focus. Some are part of global confederations or alliances and others may be small, unaffiliated organisations that address niche needs. In any one country, there may be just a few to thousands of NGOs present with a range of mandates, objectives, operations, organisational structures, impacts and effectiveness. While NGOs may have a voluntary aspect to their organisations, the majority of individuals working for them are trained professionals. NGOs usually receive their funding from private individuals and groups as well as from government and UN agencies. NGOs are not considered part of a whole-of-government response, even though their funding may come in part from government.

Many NGOs cap the amount of government funding they will accept; some do not accept any government funding so they can maintain their independence. NGOs may be singularly focused or have multiple mandates. These mandates may include humanitarian assistance, longer-term development, and/or advocacy. While most advocacy NGOs engage in aid operations, not all NGOs engage in advocacy.

NGOs tend to work in ways that build the capacity of partners, including host governments, local organisations and local communities. Increasingly, international NGOs rely more on partnerships with host nation organisations and groups and less on international staff directly implementing responses. NGOs work with communities to enhance their resilience to vulnerabilities and promote sustainable development.

Private sector

The private sector has become increasingly active in international disaster response and complex emergencies. There are a number of different scales of involvement in humanitarian action—from international to sub-national levels. Currently, private sector actors undertake considerable and critical risk management and state-building activities. Additionally, many donor programs in developing countries are implemented through a range of funding sources, such as government, philanthropic and for-profit entities. It is likely that the private sector will enhance humanitarian effects across disaster and complex emergencies in the future, given an increasingly restrained global economic environment.

Understanding the commercial realities and capacities of the private sector is important in realising a greater contribution to the humanitarian field.

The private sector has an interest in minimising disruption to economic activity caused by disasters including damage to assets, disruption to supply chains and the displacement of the workforce. The Australian Government, specifically the Humanitarian Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, promotes collaborative partnerships to share disaster risk and productive capacity following disasters. It also seeks opportunities to foster innovation in the private sector by promoting research and development partnerships that harness industry specific competencies to address growing humanitarian challenges.
