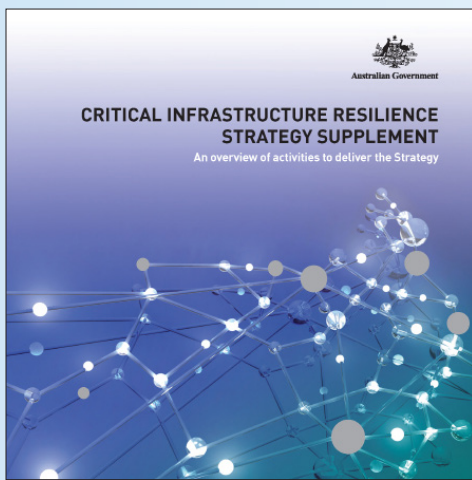




The Australian Business-Government Partnership on Critical Infrastructure Resilience



This case study is an example of action which contributes to HFA Priority for Action 1 and Priority for Action 4

Abstract

The Australian Government's Critical Infrastructure Resilience (CIR) Strategy was launched on 30 June 2010. It describes the Australian Government's approach to CIR, which is underpinned by a mostly non-regulatory business-government approach, with a focus on the continuity of essential service delivery in the face of all hazards.

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department is leading and coordinating the implementation of the CIR Strategy with government and industry stakeholders. Activities undertaken as part of the CIR Strategy to build capability in critical infrastructure organisations range from the development and promotion of an organisational resilience body of knowledge, through to the operation of the Critical Infrastructure Program for Modelling and Analysis (CIPMA), which models and simulates the behaviour of critical

infrastructure systems and how an outage or disruption in one sector can have "knock-on" effects in other sectors.

The most visible component of the business-government partnership approach underpinning the CIR Strategy is the operation of the Trusted Information Sharing Network for CIR (the TISN). The TISN was formed in April 2003 as a forum for cooperation and information sharing between the Australian Government and the owners and operators of critical infrastructure.

The sectors covered by the TISN groups include: banking and finance, communications, energy, food and grocery, health, transport and water services. There are also specialist forums, a resilience expert advisory group, and a space community of interest.

TISN initiatives include the development of shared frameworks, guides and planning documents, the conduct of large-scale exercises, and workshops that address specific threats to sectors. Key outcomes achieved through the TISN business-government partnership include:

- The Water Services Sector Group (WSSG) has promoted a "one in, all in" culture through the development of its mutual aid guidelines for the sector. These guidelines were developed to ensure that during times of emergency, water utilities are able to restore and sustain services more effectively by drawing on available resources from other unaffected areas in Australia. The use of these guidelines has directly resulted in water and waste services being restored more rapidly than would have been the case for communities affected by disasters. The guidelines have been used on a number of occasions, including following flooding in South East Queensland and Victoria in January 2011, and in February and March 2011 as the basis for the sector's assistance to Christchurch and Japan after their earthquakes.



- The Energy Sector Group (ESG) has worked to expand the available good practice information and guidance on a range of risks related to the continuity of power supply. These publications have allowed industry to discuss and share mitigation strategies and to benchmark their organisational preparedness. Specific examples have included the development of publications on liquid fuels and electricity disruptions. These publications have helped other sectors better understand the operational challenges in these energy sub-sectors, and more effectively prepare for related impacts in their own sectors.
- The Resilience Expert Advisory Group (REAG) has played a key role in providing strategic thinking on organisational resilience, and helping to develop guidance, advice and tools that support the owners and operators of critical infrastructure in adopting an organisational resilience approach. A recent REAG initiative is the development of the Organisational Resilience website, which can be found at: www.organisationalresilience.gov.au. The website provides stakeholders with access to the latest information, resources, tools, courses and events in relation to the concept of organisational resilience. It features a free assessment tool—the 'Organisational Resilience HealthCheck'—that help respondents develop a better understanding of their organisation's resilience potential, including options to address capability gaps. The HealthCheck was developed by the TISN's Resilience Expert Advisory Group in collaboration with Resilient Orgs (New Zealand).
- Critical infrastructure owners and operators have enhanced their understanding of cross-sectoral dependencies and vulnerabilities through participation in all-TISN events. Such events compliment the individual activities of each of the TISN sector groups, and have resulted in strong relationships throughout government and industry. The 2011 all-TISN event was a discussion exercise centred on a global liquid fuel supply disruption. In 2012, a TISN emerging issues workshop provided participants with detailed insights into the risks relating to offshoring of business and information functions, the use of global navigation satellite

systems, and the potential consequences of a water contamination incident. The 2013 event was a TISN futures workshop that enabled participants to explore the trends shaping the operating environment out to 2030. The 2014 event was a desktop exercise that examined the impacts of a space weather event.

- The Banking and Finance Sector Group (BFSG) has improved their pandemic preparedness through extensive work in developing and exercising plans. The BFSG's current priority is to use a series of annual exercises to build capacity and understanding in the sector of vulnerabilities around key business functions and response options to mitigate the impact of disruptions. This series of exercises will culminate in a market wide, CEO-level exercise to test the sector's collective response to an outage of an essential business function.

Closer collaboration through the TISN has facilitated information sharing within individual industries, as well as assisting to identify cross-sector dependencies. This enables a cohesive approach to addressing shared threats and vulnerabilities and building resilience across the critical infrastructure sectors.

Further information on the Australian Government's CIR Strategy, and the business-government partnership that underpins it, can be found at: www.tisn.gov.au.

