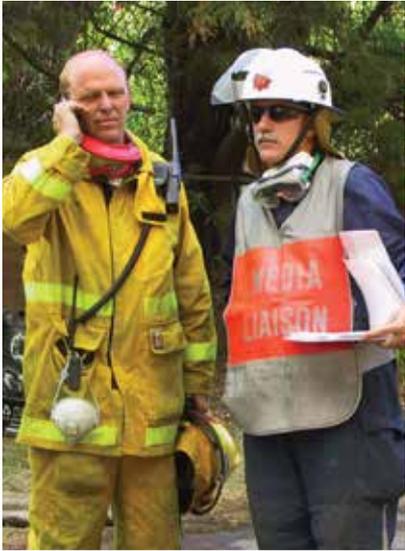# The Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System

Multi-Agency Operations and Emergency Management

Fire and emergency services are now operating to a single mantra: 'All agencies, all hazards, all the time.'

Multi-agency operations and emergency management

Interoperability is critical to how fire and emergency services operate and there are few incidents that do not require a multi-agency response. In addition, Australia's state and territory governments and emergency service organisations recognise that emergency events do not respect geographic boundaries. There needs to be the capability for all fire and emergency service agencies to manage emergency incidents seamlessly and cooperatively, and Australian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS®) provides that capability in Australia.

AIIMS®-4 fundamental doctrine

For all Australian fire and emergency services, and for a growing number of private and public sector organisations, AIIMS-4 provides the necessary incident management doctrine. AIIMS-4 provides a common incident-management framework, with processes and procedures that can be applied by all responding agencies and personnel, enabling seamless integration of activities and resources for the effective and safe resolution of any incident.

For private and public sector organisations, adopting AIIMS-4 ensures their procedures and systems are compliant and compatible with systems of work used by fire and emergency services, leading to common understanding, language, approaches and objectives. It strengthens the ability of fire and emergency services to support private and public sector organisations during emergencies.

Evolution of AIIMS®-4 doctrine

AFAC continues to work closely with the users of AIIMS-4 to ensure that the System, and its application, builds on the experience of emergency management practitioners and lessons learnt from formal and informal reviews.

The Development and release of AIIMS 4th Edition (AIIMS-4) in 2013, involved over 70 of Australia's most experienced incident managers and trainers, representing every emergency service organisation in the country. The review was informed by the research findings of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) and a range of other research institutions. Findings from inquires and analysis of major incidents undertaken by government and agencies in recent years were also factored into the review.

Key features of AIIMS®-4 are:

All-hazards incident management framework

AIIMS-4 is sufficiently flexible that it can be applied both to small and brief responses and to large, complex and protracted incidents that impact at an organisational, jurisdictional or national level. AIIMS-4 is just as applicable to bushfires as to oil spills, floods and storms. It can also be used during infrastructure emergencies and planned public events.

The system is not limited to being applied solely at the response phase of an incident; it can also be used to manage the recovery phase, as well as assisting with the management of non-emergency response situations, such as major sporting and cultural events, exhibitions and conferences. It is effectively a comprehensive 'event management system'. The system is designed to work within the legislative, policy and operational arrangements applying within any organisation or jurisdiction.

System principles

AIIMS-4 is founded on five fundamental principles, which guide the application of the system, and against which the activities of incident management are tested. The principles are:

- Flexibility
- Management by Objectives
- Functional Management
- Unity of Command
- Span of Control

Incident Control Structure
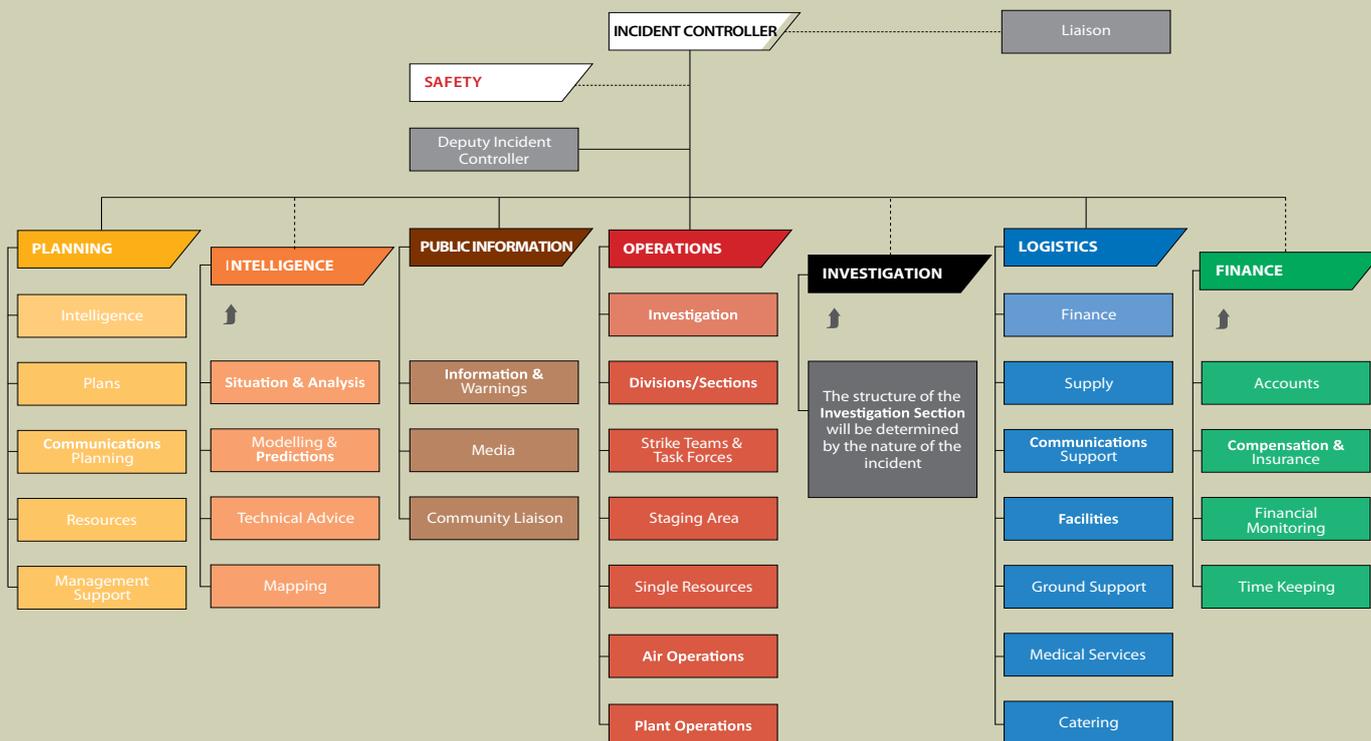
AIIMS®-4 application

Case Study: Hazelwood Mine Fire

In February 2014 a fire in the Hazelwood open cut coal mine in Victoria brought firefighters from all over Australia to support the response effort. This was an exceptionally complex fire with constant hazards for firefighters including high levels of carbon monoxide in the air and fire burning under the surface of coal faces. Eight fire services from six states and territories supported the fire fight and were able to work together effectively because they all use AIIMS-4 as their incident management system.

Case Study: NSW Floods

In late February and early March 2012 a series of weather systems delivered huge amounts of rain across southern NSW and the Southern Highlands.
The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) established an incident management team at Wagga Wagga to manage the response to the flood that impacted the Murrumbidgee basin. SES members, NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW along with police and local government were all involved in the management of the response and provided personnel as members of the incident management team. As all involved understood and accepted the principles of AIIMS-4, they were able to work effectively together to resolve the incident.

Case Study: Locust Plague

In 2010, South Eastern Australia suffered its worst locust plague in over 70 years. Locust swarms began hatching in south western NSW and by early December had travelled as far south as Melbourne. Victoria's Department of Primary Industry (DPI) was the body responsible for combating this devastating threat to the State's agriculture. An incident management team based on AIIMS-4 principles and management structures was established by DPI to oversee the response and support farmers impacted by the locusts.

Case Study: Kangaroo Island Bushfire

In December of 2007 a dry lightning storm ignited 12 fires on Kangaroo Island off the South Australian coast. The South Australian Country Fire Service called on firefighters from Victoria and NSW to assist in dealing with these fires that burnt for over two weeks. Firefighters and incident managers were able to work together effectively form the moment they arrived because all had been trained and were experienced in applying AIIMS-4.

Case Study: Motor Vehicle Accidents

Fire brigades and SES units across Australia respond to dozens of motor vehicle accidents every day. The crews work side by side to secure the scene and extricate those trapped. They use AIIMS-4 principles and management structures to ensure the seamless management of the incident and the efficient support of those involved. Police and ambulance personnel who attend are also familiar with AIIMS-4 doctrine and this allows all responders to get to work with minimal delay.

AFAC is committed to supporting the effective implementation of AIIMS®-4 and recognises that support tools, such as the AIIMS®-4 eBook and the AIIMS®-4 Aides-memoire, may assist operational personnel in time-critical and dynamic situations.

AIIMS®-4 EBOOK

AFAC has prepared the AIIMS 4th Edition for publication in an eBook format. The eBook contains all of the content found in the AIIMS-4 manual and is available through the iTunes store.

After the initial download has been completed, the AIIMS-4 eBook will no longer require an internet connection in order to access the text. The eBook has internal navigation facilitating the access of information via chapter lists and a flow-chart system. The AIIMS-4 eBook is accessible on all mobile devices that feature the standard ePub software.

AIIMS®-4 AIDES-MEMOIRE – POCKET-BOOKS AND A4-SIZE LAMINATED CARDS

AFAC has produced the AIIMS-4 Aides-mémoire in pocket-book and A4-card formats. The new AIIMS Aides-memoire have been updated to reflect all of the enhancements made to the Incident Control System with the release of AIIMS-4, and contains the new aides for the Intelligence, Investigation and Finance Sections, and for the units within each of these Sections.

### AIIMS®-4 AIDES-MEMOIRE APP

With its development sponsored by Tait Communications, the App is a mobile tool that contains all the content found in the set of AIIMS-4 Aides-mémoire and is accessible on smartphone devices.
The App is an essential guide for all those involved in managing incidents and emergencies.
It covers all the AIIMS-4 roles, their functions and handy checklists to prompt thinking and help remember aspects of a role when under pressure.
AIIMS-4 Aides-mémoire App is now available to download from iTunes or Google Play.
Once you've downloaded the App, it will be available to you even if you're not logged onto the internet.
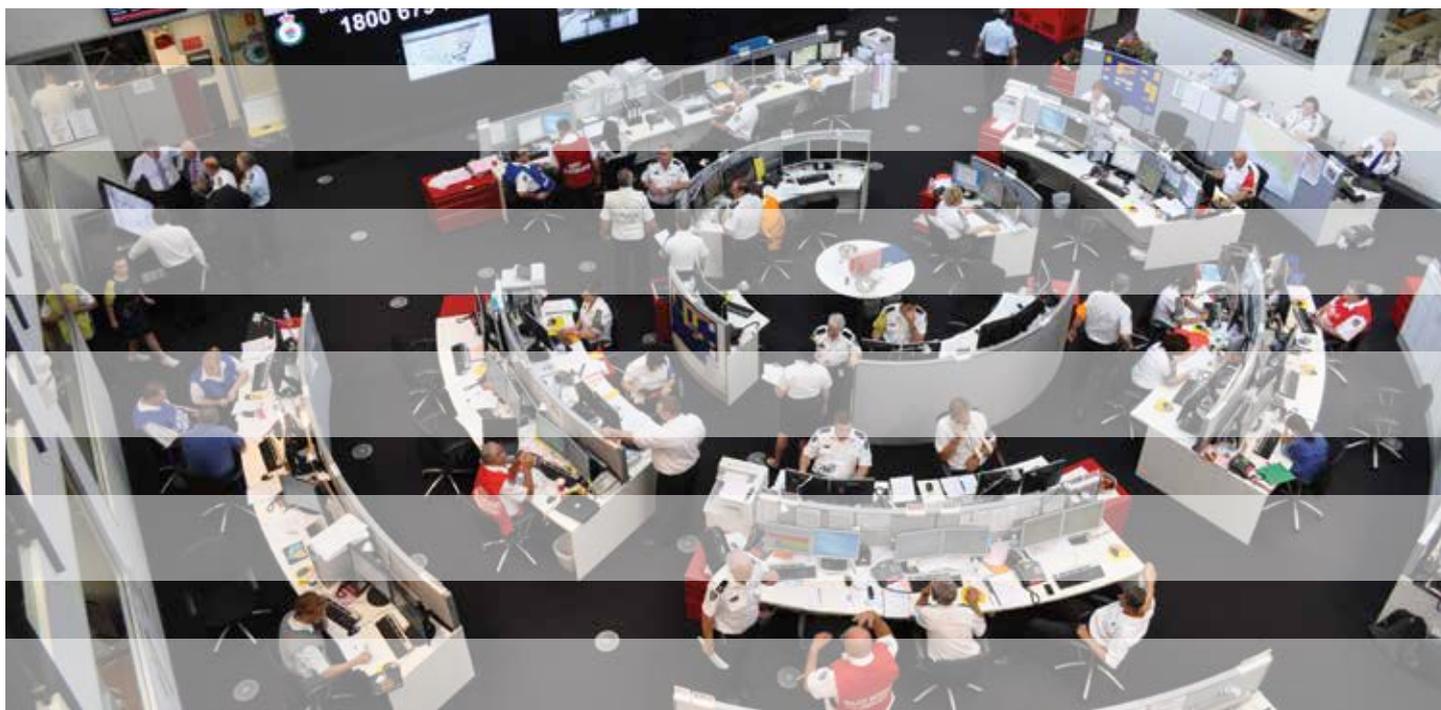
AIIMS Technical Doctrine

AIIMS®-4 eLearning Program

AFAC is developing an elearning program for delivering the AIIMS-4 TRK. The program will be incorporated into an e-learning system into which various, licensed Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) can register their own students. The program facilitates trainers from each RTO grading their own students' work (where necessary), and then generating reports of student results that can be uploaded into their own RTO's Learning Management System (LMS).

AIIMS®-4 Bridging the Gap

To support agencies and individuals in the transition to AIIMS-4, AFAC has produced a resource which comprises two parts:

Part 1: Training material in the form of PowerPoints, to explain the key refinements captured in the AIIMS-4 Manual.

Part 2: Three exercise scenarios relating to a rural fire, flood and structural fire.

This material can be used by agencies to train and exercise their staff in the key refinements captured in AIIMS-4.

AIIMS®-4 Training Resources Kit

AFAC has released the AIIMS-4 Training Resources Kit (TRK). The AIIMS-4 TRK is based on 22202VIC Course in The Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System, Version 4 (December 2013). The latest AIIMS-4 TRK incorporates all of the latest updates to AIIMS-4 and includes the new functions of Intelligence, Investigation and Finance.

Also embedded within the AIIMS-4 TRK are additional professional development modules on human factors and incident management. The production of this material is an example of end users and researchers working together to achieve beneficial outcomes for the industry.

The AIIMS-4 TRK is a robust and comprehensive resource. Its modular design supports flexible delivery, enabling it to meet a range of end user needs. AFAC has designed the course to accommodate the demand for:

1. One-day awareness training in the principles of AIIMS-4.

2. Two-day full course – AIIMS-4 awareness training, and training in all of the Incident Management Team functions (for which a statement of attainment awarded).

3. Professional development sessions covering:

   – Human Factors and incident management

   – Opening up the lines of communication

   – Incident information

   – More thinking

   – Leadership and teamwork.

Human Factors Electronic Tutorial

AFAC, in conjunction with the Bushfire CRC, has developed an electronic tutorial on Human Factors. The tutorial is a supplementary professional development resource designed to build understanding of the part that human factors play in our lives, and, in particular, how human factors impact our behaviour and performance, influencing the decisions we make and actions we take. While this tutorial was designed to support trainers preparing to deliver the human factors module within the TRK, it will be of benefit to anyone looking to explore these issues further.

Image this page courtesy Anthony Clark, NSW Rural Fire Service. Images front page (Clockwise from left): 1. South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service 2. Country Fire Authority, VIC 3. Queensland Rural Fire Service