

## Case Study - Exercise Excursion

### Exercise need

On 28 May 2025, the Narrabri Shire Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), together with the Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC), delivered Exercise Excursion at Narrabri Airport. This multi-agency, scenario-based exercise simulated an aviation crash, providing participants with the opportunity to workshop and develop their anticipated response in the local context.



This was the first airport emergency exercise held at Narrabri Airport for many years, and it aimed to strengthen local and regional preparedness for a significant aviation incident.

### Exercise aim

The exercise aimed to strengthen community safety, preparedness, response and recovery efforts by:

- **Evaluating local and regional arrangements and adequacy of resourcing** for responding to an aviation emergency within the LGA
- **Assessing the effectiveness, readiness, and suitability** of LEMC/REMC response and early recovery plans
- **Identifying gaps in knowledge, awareness and skills** amongst LEMC/REMC and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) members

### Exercise objectives

- **Ensure** that LEMC/REMC and EOC procedures are established for effective aviation emergency response and assess their scope and effectiveness
- **Confirm** that all relevant stakeholders are familiar with emergency response procedures
- **Identify** training, skills, capability, resource or logistical gaps within LEMC/REMC for emergency response readiness

### Exercise outcomes

The majority of participants agreed that the exercise was relevant and a good use of their time, with 95% reporting increased confidence in their role during an emergency.



The exercise provided an opportunity to explore critical issues, refine response coordination, and workshop solutions to realistic challenges across all phases of an aviation incident from initial alert through to immediate recovery. Participants collaborated in real time to assess strategies and actions in line with established emergency protocols. The scenario demonstrated a strong collective desire to ensure the Shire can provide a professional response to a significant airport emergency.

Key lessons included the need for faster nomination of Liaison Officers (LOs) across agencies, as delays impaired multi-agency coordination and response efficiency, and the importance of proactive engagement by SES with Airport Personnel and other emergency services at the Forward Command Post (FCP). The exercise also reinforced the value of ongoing training, clear communication protocols, and the development of a dedicated, fit for purpose airport emergency plan to further align and strengthen the collective response.

## Exercise evaluation

Observation/Insights	Sustain/ Improve
Delays in the nomination of Liaison Officers (LOs) for RFS, NSWPF, VRA, and Ambulance, affecting response efficiency and some confusion in who was coordinating on scene activities. Fire and Rescue found themselves in the middle of coordinating.	Improve
SES's insufficient proactive engagement with Airport Personnel and emergency services at the Forward Command Post (FCP), leading to coordination challenges.	Improve
Effective setup of the Forward Command Post (FCP) with comprehensive briefings.	Improve
There was continuous coordination and strong teamwork among all emergency services involved in the exercise.	Sustain
Fire and Rescue found themselves in the middle of coordinating some of the other combat agencies due to lack of on scene guidance.	Improve
NSWPF's had strong pre-emptive leadership, efficiently assigning VRA/SES to conduct a perimeter	Sustain

Observation/Insights	Sustain/ Improve
search and support uninjured passengers.	
EPA's rapid action in executing a hazardous spill disposal plan was key to safeguard the surrounding environment.	Sustain

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the exercise feedback.

### Coordination and communication

- Improve the nomination process for Liaison Officers (LOs) across all agencies to ensure timely and effective communication.
- Mandate the use of flashing red/blue beacons within the airport runway area to strengthen visibility and coordination of all emergency services.

### Training and Preparedness:

- Implement regular briefings and targeted training for SES personnel to foster active participation in emergency response efforts.
- Conduct routine training sessions for SES/VRA personnel to enhance readiness and interagency collaboration.

- Strengthen NSWPF crime scene management training to advance active response and into recovery operations.

### Resource Management:

- Streamline the nomination process for Liaison Officers (LOs) to improve efficiency and response times.
- Ensure sufficient personnel and logistical support for perimeter searches and assistance to uninjured passengers.
- Improved engagement and communication protocols for SES.
- Adopt an advanced hazardous spill disposal strategy, incorporating EPA best practices for environmental safety.