



## Local example Indigo Valley

**The Indigo Valley is located in north east Victoria and has a population of 561, stretching between Yackandandah and the Hume Highway near Barnawartha.**

The December 2015 Barnawartha fire went for seven days and burnt approximately 6,675 hectares, severely affecting communities along the Indigo Creek Valley into Barnawartha.

Three homes and 29 cars were destroyed, with water being assessed as unusable for domestic purposes. The fire also impacted agriculture with extensive losses to livestock, stock feed, agriculture and fencing.

A Bushfire Recovery Committee was established to support the Indigo Valley community's recovery from the fire.

As the recovery process progressed over some months, the committee identified there was still a need for the community to further connect and share their experiences in order to support the recovery process.

They identified a need for the community to collectively share their different perspectives, ask questions and develop joint actions and solutions to move forward together.

EMV was asked by the community and supporting organisations to assist with designing and facilitating a community led debrief process. This included using and tailoring the CBEM approach to support the identification of key priorities and building upon combined strengths.

On 20 June 2016, the local community hosted a dinner and debrief event, with the support of emergency management and community organisations.

A facilitated discussion was held to identify issues and priorities to support the recovery process and provide opportunities to learn from each other. The discussion highlighted that every community is different and people can often have very different experiences from the same emergency.

A significant success factor for this event was the ability for the community members and the organisations to answer even the most difficult questions about the fire. This was supported providing opportunities for people to submit their questions well in advance of the event.

Representatives from the Indigo Shire Council, Gateway Health, Victoria Police, CFA, DHHS, Parks Victoria, DELWP, VicRoads, AusNet Services attended the event and provided information and support.

The community has continued to work together in many ways since this event. This includes the development of a range of projects to support people to continue to recover while better preparing the community to cope with future events.

This community based approach will continue to evolve in this community, together with opportunities for other communities to better connect and support each other before, during and after.