

Emergency Management Planning Reform

State level planning

The *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (EMLA Act) was passed through Parliament in August 2018, and seeks to address known and documented risks in emergency management planning by establishing an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated framework for emergency management planning.

Changes to state level planning

- The new state level planning arrangements will replace the existing state arrangements in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act).
- A new integrated state emergency management plan (SEMP) will address mitigation, response and recovery. The SEMP will replace the existing state emergency response plan (SERP) and state emergency relief and recovery plan (SERRP). These and other parts of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV) will become redundant as implementation of the reforms progresses.
- The state guidelines and SEMP will set the direction for the next levels of emergency management planning. The SEMP will continue to evolve over time as the planning reforms are implemented and mature at the state, regional and municipal levels.

State emergency management planning guidelines

- The Minister for Police and Emergency Services can issue guidelines to facilitate and support the planning process. Emergency management planning guidelines at each level of planning will provide further detail and practical guidance on the planning process, supported by a toolkit of resources for preparers on the EM-COP platform.
- Guidelines will be issued separately for state, regional and municipal levels, but will promote a consistent approach to planning at all three levels.
- State guidelines will be formally released in mid-November 2019.

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State emergency management plan (SEMP)

- The state level arrangements formally commenced on 25 September 2019, including the obligation to prepare the SEMP.
- Once approved by the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC), it is proposed that the SEMP will take effect on 1 March 2020 to allow the regional phase to commence.
- The SEMP will outline emergency management arrangements for the entire state and inform other levels of planning. The Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) is responsible for preparing the SEMP.
- The SCRC is responsible for approving the SEMP. A statement of assurance will be prepared to ensure the preparer, the EMC, has complied with the Act and has regard to the guidelines.
- The SEMP is required to cover mitigation, response and recovery, and provide agency and department roles and responsibilities in relation to emergency management.
- The SEMP will not replace the need for more specific plans for particular industries, sectors, and emergencies. For example, specific plans that are required in the energy and water industries under industry-specific legislation. These plans will continue to be prepared in accordance with their own authorising arrangements.
- Sub-plans to the SEMP may still be needed for specific hazards, where appropriate, to allow for more specific arrangements that vary from the SEMP or to contextualise the SEMP. These sub-plans will form part of the SEMP, meaning they need to be prepared under the same requirements of the new planning arrangements.

Consultation

- Formal consultation on the state guidelines and SEMP will occur with responder agencies, departments and relevant portfolio agencies, as required by the Act.
- Initial consultation on both state documents has already commenced. Formal consultation on the state guidelines is underway for a period of six weeks. A similar process will occur for formal consultation of the SEMP.

Benefits of emergency management planning (all levels)

- Benefits we expect over time include:
 - Strengthening regional planning
 - Integrating planning for before, during and after emergencies
 - Integrating planning across the state, regional and municipal levels
 - Clarifying and strengthening governance arrangements for planning
 - Clarifying roles and responsibilities of agencies in an emergency
 - Greater engagement with the community when planning
 - Strengthening participation in planning across the sector
 - Promoting continuous improvement in planning.

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