



## **Government response to the Inspector-General for Emergency Management's *Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies***

The Government thanks the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) for his *Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies* (the review).

The review has provided an opportunity for Victoria's emergency management sector to reflect on preparedness for major emergencies as a component of the ongoing progress and direction of Victoria's emergency management reform program, which commenced in December 2012 with the publication of the emergency management reform white paper.

The review examined how prepared the emergency management sector is for major emergencies and looked at ways to enhance the preparedness work that is already being done across the sector.

The review made one recommendation, and the Government supports that recommendation in full.

As the review notes, much of the work supporting the reform of Victoria's emergency management arrangements was under development or in the early stages of implementation at the time of the IGEM review.

The Government appreciates the positive account given in the report of a number of case studies of existing activities, such as the effective transfer of relief and recovery accountabilities and Exercise Prometheus, a multi-agency hypothetical emergency exercise undertaken in 2015.

EMV will continue to implement the Government's emergency management reform agenda and lead and coordinate emergency preparedness, response and recovery with the sector and the community.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

IGEM recommends that Emergency Management Victoria continue to lead the development and application of a comprehensive sector wide preparedness model for integration within and across emergency management arrangements in Victoria.

This model should clearly define preparedness within the context of sector and statewide activity, underpinned by a thorough understanding of risk, and embracing the principles of shared responsibility, through enhanced connections with Victorian Communities

The model should specifically address, among other things, the key elements of governance, risk management, planning, capability and capacity assessment, training and development, exercising, evaluation and monitoring.

**Government response:** Support in full

This review highlighted a number of key elements required for any preparedness model adopted by the emergency management sector.

EMV, in collaboration with Victoria's emergency management sector, is developing and building upon a number of initiatives to assist emergency management agencies and the community to improve their emergency preparedness. These initiatives include the development of a framework for the sector to assess its progress and outcomes against the sector's vision of *Safer and more resilient communities*. This framework identifies the importance of active reporting, monitoring and reviewing, which then feeds into a cycle of continuous improvement.

EMV is also continuing to lead a new approach to formal lessons management, which will help agencies use lessons learned from past experiences to better plan their future emergency programs. The *EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework* was released in November 2015, with an ongoing program of implementation.

In 2016, the sector developed the *Victoria Preparedness Goal*, which sets out the core capabilities required to deal with the challenges and risks we face as a community, and how we effectively build and deliver those capabilities. This model is based on the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) *National Preparedness Goal*, which is cited in the review as a better practice model.

This model will allow the emergency management sector to:

- develop targets against the State's greatest risks;
- assess its capabilities against these risks;
- detect any gaps; and
- identify ways to optimise community, business and government capability and capacity before, during and after an emergency.

The emergency management planning reform, described later, will have an improved focus on understanding capability and capacity at a local, regional and State level.

In leading the development and application of a sector-wide preparedness model, EMV and the sector recognises the need to constantly improve in a number of areas highlighted in the recommendation:

### *Governance*

Following the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC) and Victoria Floods Review (VFR), significant reform of governance arrangements for major emergencies has been achieved. This has included legislative reform through planned amendments following on from the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, to address the systemic issues relating to the control and coordination of major emergencies. The governance arrangements have been developed from the review and examination of actual major emergency events and multi-agency state level exercises.

Additional reform of the governance and operation of key operational teams has been undertaken to address the shortcomings of the governance of major emergencies identified in the VBRC and VFR. The new governance arrangements, including the roles and responsibilities of each state tier team, are clarified in the *State Tier Emergency Management Governance Arrangements (Operational Readiness, Response and Recovery Activities) October 2015* (further updated in 2016).

In 2016, EMV (in consultation with Victorian Departments and agencies) reviewed and updated the *State Emergency Response Plan (SERP)*, taking the above reforms into account. The issuing of the revised *SERP* was accompanied by information and education tools suitable for adaptation by all

Departments and agencies to support internal agency briefings, education, and awareness initiatives.

A key component of the *SERP's* revision was the requirement by each agency to review and update their roles and responsibilities in Part 7 of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*. Amendments to the *Emergency Management Act 2013* also required agencies to comply with the *SERP* and their listed roles and responsibilities.

Since 2009, Victoria has experienced major emergencies at conditions approaching those of Black Saturday and the 2010/11, as well as other hazards. These have been managed through the new governance arrangements. The management of these major emergencies have been robust and these events have been reported in each year's operational review (available on the EMV website) and through IGEM's own monitoring and review processes.

### *Risk management*

Risk management underpins all of EMV's emergency management planning at a local, regional and state level. Since 2006, Victoria has undertaken state emergency risk assessments in line with national guidelines. In 2014, the results of these assessments were published in the *Emergency Risks in Victoria Report*. In other years, these assessments have been made available to the emergency management sector to use for planning purposes. EMV is currently leading the 2016-17 review of the state level emergency risks under a national partnership agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

### *Planning*

EMV is undertaking substantive work to make improvements to emergency planning, which will provide a new enabling framework to underpin integrated emergency management planning in Victoria at the local, regional and State levels, including recognition of the importance of community plans for emergencies. This work is intended to strengthen emergency management planning, placing greater focus on the planning process and working collaboratively to develop integrated emergency management plans that incorporate mitigation, response and recovery, including specifying roles and responsibilities.

### *Assessing capability*

The *Victorian Emergency Management Capability Blueprint 2015-2025* outlines the current and desired future state for Victoria's emergency management capability. The *Victorian Preparedness Goal* will allow the emergency management sector to develop capability targets against the state's greatest risks, assess its current capabilities against the requirements, articulate any gaps and look at optimising community, business and government capability and capacity before, during and after an emergency.

### *Training and development*

A multi-agency process for training and accreditation has been in operation since July 2014. All training and accreditation documentation is available on the Emergency Management Common Operational Picture (EMCOP). The ongoing development and enhancement of training and accreditation is undertaken by the sector.

### *Exercising*

An exercising framework has been developed with the sector, including IGEM representatives. The framework comprises guidance tools, information and a library of example exercises. Ongoing funding is available to Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees to conduct multi-agency exercises. A requirement of the funding is the provision of an exercise evaluation report to enable identified improvements to be shared across the sector to enhance overall preparedness. The current theme is based around mass relocation of the community.

EMV in collaboration with TAFE has also initiated an exercise management and evaluation course to increase the number of personnel, across a range of Departments and agencies, that are trained in developing, managing and evaluating exercises.

### *Evaluation, Monitoring and Improvement*

EMV is developing an *Emergency Management Sector Performance Framework* for the sector to assess its progress against Victoria's vision of *Safer and more resilient communities*. In recognition of the sector's complexity this framework articulates and synthesizes the links between the *Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP)* and the *Emergency Management Performance Standards*, with performance measures at both the strategic and functional levels. It also identifies the importance of active reporting, monitoring and review, which then feeds into a cycle of continuous improvement. The role of IGEM in undertaking monitoring and assurance for the sector is also identified within the framework.

Section 48 of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* provides that the Emergency Management Commissioner must develop, and review from time to time, operational standards in relation to the performance by responder agencies of their functions. To date, *Emergency Management Performance Standards* have been published in relation to Capability and Response for responder agencies. Performance standards in relation to Risk and Resilience, and Relief and Recovery, are near completion.

The State Fire Management Planning Committee has auspiced the trial of a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework for fire management planning at the State, regional and municipal levels over the last 18 months. The evaluation is being reported to the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) Risk and Resilience Sub-committee. This work will inform development of the *Emergency Management Planning Guidelines*, which will link into the *Victorian Preparedness Goal*. Work is currently underway to develop an overarching evaluation, monitoring and improvement process.

EMV is continuing to lead a new approach to formal lessons management which includes the development of a framework (EM-LEARN), process and IT system to support consistent capture, analysis and implementation of lessons into the future. This sector-wide approach to continuous

improvement for emergency management aligns with IGEM's *Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management*, as well as with the national approach to lessons management. The *EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework*, released in November 2015, has an ongoing program of implementation across the emergency management sector and has previously been highlighted and supported by IGEM.