



Creating safer and more resilient communities

Emergency Management Victoria

**Working in conjunction
with Communities,
Government, Agencies
and Business**

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“ Helping Victorians when they are at their most vulnerable is not something that a single agency or service can necessarily manage on its own ”



Our story

In times of crisis and adversity, Victorians come together to react, care for themselves and each other, and support one another at a community level.

Just as this instinct is knitted into the fabric of Victorian communities, so too is it the organising principle by which partners across Victoria's emergency management system work together to protect and keep communities safe.

Made up of more than 60 organisations working in partnership with communities, businesses and individuals across Victoria, the ethos of 'working as one' drives Victoria's emergency management system.

These organisations include emergency services, health and community services, local government and industry, as well as many other public and private organisations.

Over many years, these dedicated partners have stepped up to assist Victorians and their families in times of need.

The effort, service and capability that each organisation provides helps to reduce hardship and trauma, and the loss of life and injury.

However, emergency events are often complex - creating chaos and challenges to the things we can normally control - and increasingly, they are becoming more intense and frequent. Helping Victorians when they are at their most vulnerable is not something that a single agency or service can necessarily manage on its own.

A system that brings together the people, skills, resources and systems - the collective capability and capacity across organisations - works best towards the objective of reducing the impact of emergencies on

human life, communities, essential community infrastructure and the environment.

It is Emergency Management Victoria's legislated role to organise and oversee this system to ensure that the individual functions delivered by emergency management organisations integrate - collectively, efficiently and effectively - to serve the community's needs. EMV also ensures that cohesive planning and resilience efforts are initiated and maintained before, during and after emergencies to help to keep communities safe.

Where possible, there are actions that every Victorian can take to minimise the chances of an emergency occurring, as well as its impacts. Despite our best efforts, however, Victoria will be challenged and faced with loss in the future. Some contributing factors will be outside the control of the emergency management system and broader government efforts.

A cohesive system can strengthen resilience by ensuring Victorians have access to relief and recovery services when an emergency happens - because the services are better integrated into the broader emergency management system, enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes.

Ensuring this system is inter-linked and working effectively is a large, complex task. It relies on collaboration and commitment across many proud, respected and capable organisations.

All emergencies demand an immediate focus on safety and test the resilience and strength of an affected community in many ways. This in turn calls for leadership and energy to achieve the shared vision across the many partnerships that make up the system - the vision of 'safer and more resilient communities'.



**“ The 2009 Victorian Bushfires
Royal Commission was clear –
change was essential ”**

The path to a resilience-based emergency management system

Victoria has learnt hard and often painful lessons over many years, and more recently from tragic events such as the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, the 2010-11 floods and the Hazelwood coal mine fire.

These experiences, and the reviews and inquiries that followed, demonstrated the consequences of emergency management organisations working in “silos”, being stretched beyond capacity, and not being properly connected into a broader system.

Since the devastating mark left in Victoria by the 2009 bushfires, enormous transformation of the state’s emergency management system has been taking place to strengthen the focus on communities and agencies working better together.

The 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission was clear - change was essential. Nothing would be overcome simply by doing more of the same, even if it was done better. The role of the Fire Services Commissioner was created to coordinate bushfire planning and response, and other widespread reforms were initiated.

Although significant gains were being made in the fire services, Victorians continued to feel the impact of other extreme weather events such

as flood, storms and heat. The 2010-11 floods were the worst Victoria had ever experienced, impacting more than one-third of the State.

Victoria’s arrangements were further transformed following the recommendations of the *2010-11 Review of Flood Warnings and Response*, leading to better coordination of an *all hazards and emergencies* approach, not just a focus on fires, under the leadership of the then Fire Services Commissioner and, from 2014, the Emergency Management Commissioner (which superseded the role of Fire Services Commissioner).

The *White Paper on Victorian Emergency Management Reform* in 2012 continues to drive transformation of the system, underpinned by the principle of resilience - that the capacity of a community to respond to, recover from, rebuild and revitalise from emergencies is more important than the cause of it.

This is at the heart of a ‘resilience-based’ approach that Victoria has since embraced.

Enabling transformation through an emergency management philosophy

To strengthen the focus on building community resilience to emergencies, EMV was created in 2014 to lead and oversee the end-to-end functioning of the emergency management system.

Since its inception, EMV has led reforms in partnership with key stakeholders aimed at uniting the many different parts of the emergency management system around a common purpose - working with communities to build safety and resilience in their ability to prepare and plan for, withstand and recover from emergencies.

Communities that are resilient are:

- Safe and well
- Connected, inclusive and empowered
- Dynamic with a diverse local economy
- Sustainably built with a natural environment
- Culturally rich and vibrant
- Democratic and engaged
- Reflective and aware

To build resilience, Victoria's 'all communities, all emergencies' model was designed to reach beyond events such as fires and floods (known as Class 1 emergencies) to include other land-based, water-based, human, animal, infrastructure and technology emergencies (Class 2). Many of these are emerging challenges for Victoria, with impacts and consequences that are wide-reaching. Some Class 2 emergencies will test Victoria's resilience as they have the potential to last for months on end.

EMV and this system-wide reform is jointly led by the Emergency Management Commissioner alongside the Chief Executive (also the Deputy Secretary for Emergency Management, Department of Justice and Regulation).

These two leadership positions ensure that effective and efficient service delivery and accountability is occurring in an integrated way across the broader system. This enables the system to scale up, as needed, and draw on the capacity and capabilities - the people, resources, governance, systems and processes - needed to protect community safety.

Emergency Management Commissioner

The Emergency Management Commissioner is responsible for coordinating the emergency management system's readiness, preparedness, response and recovery for when Class 1 and 2 emergencies reach a level of significance where human life and property come under threat (major emergencies). While Victoria Police oversees coordination and control during security (Class 3) emergencies, the Emergency Management Commissioner leads consequence management and relief and recovery arrangements for Class 3 emergencies. This points to the need for a cohesive and integrated approach to deter, detect, delay and respond to threats within the changing security environment.

For major Class 1 and 2 emergencies, the Commissioner leads the coordination of agencies which have roles and responsibilities in managing the emergency, as well as ensuring control arrangements are in place. Planning is an important way of mitigating risk, strengthening resilience and building preparedness to respond to and recover from emergencies.

Other key responsibilities include:

- managing the State Control Centre
- consequence management
- coordinating recovery for all emergencies
- advising the Minister for Emergency Services during major emergencies

Additionally, the Commissioner is responsible for developing and maintaining operational standards and incident procedures for the performance of emergency management functions by response agencies, as well as ensuring Class 2 events are being appropriately managed.

The Commissioner leads and promotes the implementation of the *Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan*, on behalf of the State Crisis and Resilience Council. The Strategic Action Plan is a mechanism which helps drive emergency management reform so that the system works better together.



The Commissioner is required, under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, to have regard to the fundamental importance of the role of volunteers in the performance of emergency management functions in Victoria.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for the day-to-day management of EMV and leading large-scale investment projects on behalf of emergency management organisations. This includes major procurement, communications and information systems, and emergency management planning processes which can achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

EMV's staff support the Commissioner and Chief Executive in fulfilling these functions and the broader emergency management sector as it continues to learn lessons and strengthen its own resilience and capability.

The roles of the Commissioner and the Chief Executive, through the support of EMV and through mechanisms such as the Strategic Action Plan, are significant enablers in driving transformation to a holistic, end-to-end, all-communities, all-emergencies system.

“Effective communication during emergencies is as critical as ever”

The six C's

Driving transformation to a holistic, end-to-end, all communities, all emergencies system means shifting away from traditional emergency response-centric model - based on a command, control and coordination way of operating - to a more community-centric and inclusive model built on resilience and shared responsibility.

This is because while there is often a focus on the direct effects of an emergency on physical safety and property, the complexity and chaos caused by the emergency can also have consequences on the wider community, agency personnel, the economy, and the natural environment. Some consequences can still be felt well after the event has been controlled and adversely impacted a community's recovery.

Community connection means understanding and connecting with trusted networks, leaders and all communities, to support resilience and decision-making before, during and after the emergency.

Effective communication during emergencies is also as critical as ever, as emphasised repeatedly in recent inquiries and reviews into emergency management-related matters.

So while the functions of Command, Control and Coordination remain important today, we believe our future system must be supplemented by a focus on consequence, communication and community. The six C's represent the natural evolution from a narrow operating model to an extensive community-centric emergency management system.

It is for these reasons that the combined 'six C's' are leading to a huge shift in how we are approaching and building a modern emergency management system for Victoria.

“ One resilient organisation and community will look different to another ”



Building community resilience to deliver an improved emergency management system

The characteristics of resilient communities outlined above reflect qualities that enable communities to avoid or manage emergencies. But they are also qualities that lead to healthy and thriving communities well placed to take advantage of opportunities for the future.

The move to resilience as an underpinning principle is the next logical step in meeting future community challenges.

The *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management* adopts chronic stresses (slow onset issues such as climate change or mental health in a community) and acute shocks (emergencies, disasters or crises) as the two fundamental pillars that move us from the traditional emergency hazard and risk-based approach.

There is no “one-size fits all” answer to what it is to be a resilient community or how organisations can collaborate and take actions to reduce the consequences of emergencies. One resilient organisation and community will look different to another. Each will have different social and settlement qualities, risks, services, leadership networks and characteristics – but communities will often have common elements that work together to build resilience.

EMV plays a critical role in overseeing these efforts aimed at strengthening community resilience, where required.

Holistic, comprehensive, end-to-end planning before, during and after emergencies helps keep communities safe. EMV drives the planning and response - before during and after events occur - across the emergency management system at a state, regional, municipal and community level.

EMV also supports community-based emergency management planning efforts which are essential to building local resilience.

Adapting and using the Community Based Emergency Management approach provides communities with opportunities to lead, while inviting people from emergency services, government, business, industry, non-government organisations and the not for profit sector to also participate in decision making processes that affect them.

This approach enables local community members, including volunteers and staff from organisations, to strengthen connections and build relationships by working together to identify priorities and develop solutions. This may be achieved by connecting and working with existing community-based groups, networks and processes, or by developing new ones if required.



NOTHING CHANGES
IF
NOTHING CHANGES

Developing a capable workforce

To protect the Victorian community, we need to understand the resilience of the emergency management system by knowing our capability - the people, resources, governance, systems and processes - needed to future-proof Victoria.

By knowing what these capabilities are, we can see the gaps and help build Victoria's resilience. Victoria's *Preparedness Framework* and *Preparedness Goal*, is assisting in understanding the key capabilities required in a major emergency. It aligns with the *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*.

At the heart of the emergency management system are the people who help keep Victoria safe.

Not only are our people champions of leading and influencing change across Victoria, they drive community safety and help future proof the state. Our people need to be supported through investment in skills, knowledge and tools that will equip them for the future.

Whether they are volunteers or paid emergency management personnel, these investments are essential in developing the next generation of leadership and the stewardship of the sector.

Volunteerism is something Victorians are very proud of and needs to be enabled and supported to grow. Sustainable volunteering helps to build a community-based and locally connected model that, by design, builds emergency management resilience day in, day out.

Supporting the growth and development of volunteers is critical and is an enshrined role in EMV's legislation. A key priority is

comprehensively understanding, capturing, validating and measuring the value of emergency management volunteers, volunteering and volunteerism in Victoria.

A well-trained, skilled, highly-motivated and highly-valued emergency management workforce helps build resilience and delivers better community safety outcomes.

Putting in place the best possible systems, information technology, training and support will help them succeed.

The emergency management system supports the wider Victorian community which is proud of its diversity and multiculturalism. Our communities are made up of people who identify themselves by reference to a broad range of attributes such as gender identity, race, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, cultural and linguistic background, religious belief, sexual orientation, age, disability and socioeconomic status. This is expected to continue into the future.

The *Victorian Emergency Management Diversity and Inclusion Framework* recognises that understanding the diverse needs, capabilities and expectations of different communities is imperative for ensuring their safety and increasing their resilience.

As the benefits and values of diversity and inclusion become increasingly understood, they will continuously shape the future of emergency management in Victoria.

Supporting community resilience as a shared responsibility

While responsibility for building resilience is shared between state government agencies and individuals, there is an onus upon emergency managers to ensure that Victorians are empowered to become more resilient in the face of stresses and shocks that affect their communities.

Part of supporting community resilience and shared responsibility is through empowering good decision making. We need to continually explore ways to connect with community, and two-way communications are fundamentally important in building resilience.

One way that EMV is doing this is through the Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EM-COP), a web-based information-gathering, planning and collaboration tool. EM-COP is designed to provide users with a simple way to gather, organise, create and share emergency management information between emergency managers and communities.

Using the EM-COP platform, the emergency management sector provides information and warnings to communities through multiple channels which allows them to make their own decisions around safety - reinforcing shared responsibility, resilience and good planning.

Having better information about issues that impact public safety leads to better decision making and better outcomes by both communities and emergency managers, helping to create safer and more resilient communities.

After an emergency, resilient and sustainable community recovery is built on a strong connection between communities and the broad network of recovery partners, through a focus on shared community outcomes.

To achieve this, Victoria's relief and recovery system focuses on building community resilience; facilitating community participation; connecting with community systems and existing networks, supporting measures to address the long-term impacts of emergencies; and ensuring sustainable recovery efforts that focus on the wellbeing and liveability of our communities.

The foundation of a *Resilient Recovery* model is a shift from activity-based arrangements to an integrated system that recognises the complexity of the recovery process, and brings together the broad collection of people and services that contribute to good recovery outcomes. The *Resilient Recovery* approach will connect the diverse components within relief and recovery to improve delivery of community recovery outcomes, for a safer and more resilient future. Building resilience for communities includes ensuring that infrastructure lifelines can provide Victorians with everyday needs such as food, water and energy supply, as well as telecommunications and health services.

The *Critical Infrastructure Resilience Arrangements* create partnerships between government and industry that plan for shocks and stresses to critical lifelines, and the consequences of all emergencies. These arrangements, overseen by EMV, are fundamental to ensuring a safe and resilient Victoria and are just one of the ways the emergency management sector works with industry.

“Part of supporting community resilience and shared responsibility is through empowering good decision making”



“ Ultimately the delivery of emergency management services must keep in step with the pace of change ”

Meeting future challenges

As we work towards an “all communities, all emergencies” system that effectively and efficiently works as one, we need to ensure the future service delivery model for emergency management better reflects the communities it serves.

This especially means it must reflect the full continuum of the community’s needs before, during and after emergencies.

Ultimately, the delivery of emergency management services must keep in step with the pace of change. If it does not, the emergency management system will be unable to respond to future risks and challenges, and fall short in meeting community needs.

A future service delivery model which truly incorporates preparedness, response, relief and recovery across multiple emergencies can better drive integration of the six C’s into the operation of emergency management in Victoria over coming years, optimising community safety and resilience outcomes.

The process of change must not stop here. The path to safer and more resilient communities must continue if we are to best future-proof Victoria from the growing complexities and emerging challenges ahead.

This is because the trends we are seeing today will have a big impact on the future of Victoria’s communities.

Climate change is increasing the intensity, severity, duration and frequency of extreme weather events.

Population change will see higher levels of growth in cities and regional centres than other parts of Victoria which may experience decline.

The emergence of new technologies is increasingly impacting on how services and infrastructure are used, leading to increasing community expectations of government.

A complex intersection between global and local issues will continue to shape the evolving security threat.

These are just a few risks and challenges that will confront emergency management in Victoria into the future. We will continue to evolve, learn, change and grow.

Helping Victorians work towards a better future means that the emergency management system needs to strengthen its foresight to understand the impact and consequences of current and future trends. This has never been more important in future-proofing Victoria for the years to come.

The emergency management system that exists today reflects Victoria’s experiences and the communities that it serves. Major strides have been made over the last decade which have resulted from hardship and loss, and will continue to be made as we learn lessons from our experiences.

Supporting a high-performing sector made up of people in leading change, sustaining collective capability and system delivery will ultimately help reach the vision of safer and more resilient communities.

Ultimately, building a system which works as one also helps to build a better future which our communities deserve.



Further reading

These documents are available on the EMV website at www.emv.vic.gov.au

Common Operating Picture: how we work together in Victoria

Community Based Emergency Management

Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management

Emergency Management Diversity and Inclusion Framework

Emergency Management Performance Standards

Incident management

Resilient Recovery

Victorian Preparedness Framework

Victorian Preparedness Goal





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