EMV
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
VICTORIA

Resilient recovery strategy

Contents

Acknowledgment of Country

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land. EMV also acknowledges and pays respect to the Elders, past and present and is committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to achieve a shared vision of safer and more resilient communities.

Message from the Emergency Management Commissioner

The changing climate and increasingly complex types of emergencies is challenging Victoria's emergency management arrangements. The way we plan for, respond to and support recovery needs to reflect this and build on our experiences to deliver better services to Victorians affected by emergencies.

Natural disasters cost Victoria

about $1 billion per year. This is predicted to increase to $3.2 billion by 2050.

Australia-wide, the cost of natural disasters to governments, business and communities

is forecast to be about $33 billion by 2050.[1]

Victoria needs a recovery system that supports more timely and more streamlined services that meet what people need in the aftermath of an emergency. And we need to enable individuals to help themselves and each other through longer-term recovery.

Surviving an emergency is often life-changing. Everyone recovers from an emergency event differently. It is vital that emergency recovery practitioners work across government and with communities to get the best outcomes for those affected.

The *Resilient Recovery Strategy* is our shared vision for those supporting recovery. It puts individuals and communities at the centre of the recovery effort. It also shows how resilience can be built over time – in individuals, communities, the private sector and in Victoria's recovery system.

We heard from state government agencies, councils, community, emergency services, businesses and others when we were developing this strategy. During this extensive engagement process, we heard about positive recovery experiences and areas that need reform. We also discussed how we can deliver that reform over time, with the support of the recovery workforce and communities.

This strategy is the Victorian Government's commitment to improving our recovery system so that it supports community resilience, streamlines services and allows individuals and communities to lead and act to shape their future after an emergency.

This strategy alone cannot deliver all the agreed outcomes, but it will focus our efforts. By implementing this strategy, working with councils and recovery practitioners, we aim to decrease the huge social and economic costs of disasters and improve recovery and resilience outcomes for individuals and communities over time.

We can all act to improve the resilience of Victorian communities. This strategy is a key step in planning how to make that happen in recovery.

Andrew Crisp APM
Emergency Management Commissioner

[1] *Beyond Bushfires: Community Resilience and Recovery study, 2016; Australian Business Roundtable, Building resilience to natural disasters in our states and territories, 2017; Australian Business Roundtable, The economic cost of social impact of natural disasters, 2016*

Introduction

The *Resilient Recovery Strategy* is a strategy for the Victorian Government that sets agreed outcomes and strategic priorities to guide how government improves recovery approaches and systems and supports and empowers councils and the recovery workforce.

Across Victoria, individuals and their communities will benefit from a more robust and resilient emergency recovery system guided by this strategy.

Emergency events are becoming more frequent, varied and complex. There are also rarer types of emergencies emerging, such as thunderstorm asthma, acts of extreme violence and cyber-threats. This is putting greater pressure on the current recovery system.

Recovering from emergencies is also costly. The 2009 Victorian Bushfires demonstrate the complexity of an emergency and the far-reaching effects on the community. This event also shows the enormous social, environmental and economic costs associated with ongoing recovery.

The *Resilient Recovery Strategy* recognises the challenges involved in long-term emergency recovery and the critical importance of the people, systems and structures that enable recovery to occur. It provides a strategy for the Victorian Government to improve current arrangements to meet future needs and build resilience in communities.

The strategy is built on national and international evidence and frameworks. It sets out shared outcomes and strategic priorities for the Victorian Government. These outcomes and priorities are based on extensive engagement with those impacted by disasters, as well as workers from across the recovery sector, including local communities and businesses, NGOs, local and state governments.

This strategy outlines the current recovery system and identifies areas that can improve through better integration, streamlining and strengthening what already works well. Victoria's recovery system relies on multiple government agencies to build on the leadership role of councils in recovery coordination and delivery at place. The involvement of state agencies will depend on the nature and scale of the emergency event, and the escalation of activities to support councils in their role.

The *Resilient Recovery Strategy* seeks to improve the way the current system operates across multiple levels of government and in building community resilience before and after events.

The strategy will be supported by a comprehensive implementation plan that further details the Victorian Government's agreed actions.

Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities

institutions, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and thrive

no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.[1]

The social and economic recovery of a community

can be largely influenced by both the pre-disaster resilience of that community and the responsiveness of recovery services and support.[2]

Nearly all the $7 billion cost of the 2009 Victorian bushfires

was due to tangible and intangible relief, recovery and reconstruction, including the substantial costs

associated with mental health, family violence, environmental impacts and chronic disease.[3]

[1] 100 Resilient Cities 2016 – Community Resilience Framework, Emergency Management Victoria
[2] Economic Recovery After Disaster Strikes, SGS Economics & Planning
[3] Australian Business Roundtable, The economic cost of social impact of natural disasters, 2016

The need for change

The frequency, intensity and consequences of emergencies have continued to increase in recent years. Communities that have always lived with the risk of natural disasters are likely to experience them more often and with greater intensity. Victorians are increasingly facing new types of emergencies. Demographic and technological shifts have also changed what community expect from government and the ways that government and communities interact.

These shifts are challenging traditional approaches to emergency recovery. This includes the established roles, responsibilities and relationships across government and non-government partners, and the processes that enable effective recovery.

There is an opportunity to improve the timeliness and integration of recovery services by working with all partners to respond to these challenges together. In doing this, we can reduce duplication of effort, enhance the use of collective resources and help individuals to better understand the services and support they can expect from government.

To support timely delivery of services, the sector is also in need of a flexible and sustainable funding model for recovery that provides clarity and confidence in the funding available. This will support recovery agencies to seek funding to deliver necessary services that support the long-term resilience of impacted communities.

While government endeavours to act quickly to support communities, it is important to engage with communities in the design and delivery of services. By applying evidence and insights about what works in recovery, and implementing more community-centred models, the recovery workforce can achieve better long-term outcomes that reflect the needs of the entire community.

As a sector, this presents significant opportunities to work more closely with communities. Empowered communities are stronger and have more resilience as they continue through their recovery journey. This approach supports state government and councils to be clearer on our shared responsibility with community. It also helps to ensure that government's recovery services and commitments are equitable and well considered.

There are clear opportunities for improvement to ensure that recovery activities support, rather than erode, existing individual and community resilience and local leadership. This recognises the important role of councils and communities to shape and inform their recovery.

...engage with communities in the design and delivery of services.

By applying evidence and insights about what works in recovery, and implementing more community-centred models,

the recovery workforce can achieve better long-term outcomes that reflect the needs of the entire community.

The current recovery system

Victoria's recovery system is based on the principles of managing locally, closest to the community and with the ability to scale up to deal with more widespread and complex issues and support needs.

This recognises the key role of non-government organisations, community groups, businesses and others. This system is underpinned by the *National Principles for Disaster Recovery*.

Understand the context

Successful recovery is based on an understanding of community context, with each community having its own history, values and dynamics.

Recognise complexity

Successful recovery is responsive to the complex and dynamic nature of both emergencies and the community.

Use community-led approaches

Successful recovery is community- centred, responsive and flexible, engaging with community and supporting them to move forward.

Coordinate all activities

Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach, between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.

Communicate effectively

Successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.

Recognise and build capacity

Successful recovery recognises, supports, and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience.

There is a well-established recovery system in Victoria, with committed recovery workers across the state and within the government and non-government sectors. This strategy builds on what works well within the current system so that people can quickly and easily access more streamlined support for recovery.

Roles and responsibilities

Councils and state government and government agencies work in partnership with non-government organisations, community groups and businesses to deliver Victoria's recovery programs and services. Service delivery is generally place-based and, where possible, led by councils in both delivery and coordination.

Large-scale, complex emergency events or those with significant consequences are coordinated at a regional or state level. When escalated to region or state, the Victorian Government will lead coordination and will partner with councils, local organisations and communities through Community Recovery Committees (CRCs) and other community governance structures to deliver place-based recovery services.

Effective coordination relies on a clear and shared understanding of roles and responsibilities that are adhered to at all levels. These are set out in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*.

Context of events and communities

The recovery workforce needs to better understand the context of an emergency event and the individuals and communities affected. If community is involved early in the planning and design of recovery programs and services, these services are more likely to meet the needs of those affected.

There have been many examples of the improved recovery outcomes for communities who have been more actively involved in their recovery through governance bodies such as CRCs and local government emergency planning collaborations. There is opportunity to identify best practice and lessons learned in these partnerships and apply these more consistently across the state.

Clearer governance and planning arrangements will empower all levels of government to work with communities more effectively before and after emergencies. This will help communities to shape their own recovery.

Integration of services

Government has agreed leads who will act in an emergency and respond to the various impacts to community and the environment, within their portfolios. This allows the design and delivery of appropriate recovery services and programs. While these arrangements enable specific elements of recovery to be addressed, integration across programs and services can be lacking.

In complex recovery environments (that escalate to region or state) recovery services and programs can be even more siloed within different parts of government. This can lead to fractured connections to community services and programs. The more complex the recovery environment, the more challenging this becomes, yet it is critical.
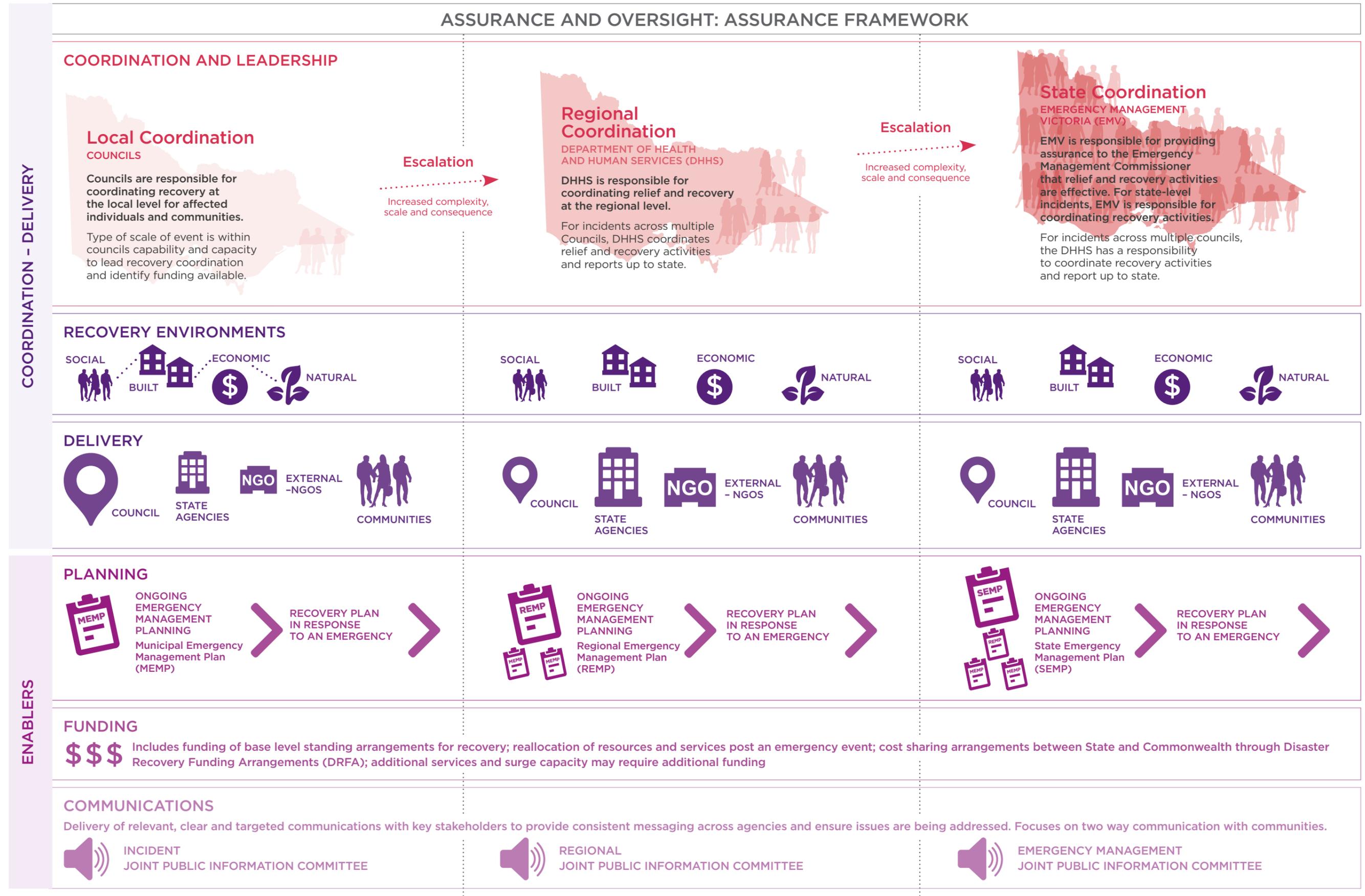
Enabling arrangements

The recovery system is supported by enabling functions of planning (pre and post emergencies), funding and communications. These are critical functions to support the coordination and delivery of services at any level. Effective communication relies on good community engagement practices and leverages the relationships and networks of community groups and CRCs. This will better place all levels of government to tailor the information being provided to communities, ensuring that it is appropriate, timely and relevant for their recovery journey.

Councils and state government deliver recovery services that draw on existing resources and expertise. However, significant events may rely on 'surge capacity' to rapidly divert existing or additional resources to support recovery, which may even see the deployment of recovery resources from other jurisdictions.

The sporadic nature of emergencies means that some councils and recovery agencies have developed more experience and have better resources in recovery. If councils and agencies are better supported to rapidly connect skilled recovery practitioners from different locations, recovery services can be delivered more swiftly and efficiently.

A significant challenge for Victoria's recovery system is being able to mobilise resources in a timely way to meet the needs of affected communities and sustain resourcing through longer-term recovery when necessary. This starts with the existing resources available, but rapid and comprehensive impact assessment also informs if and what additional resourcing is required. The ability to meet surge demand requires flexibility in the system to respond and adapt in a timely way. It also requires strong relationships to quickly identify what resources are available and agree how to put these in place.

Figure 1: Victoria's current recovery model

ASSURANCE AND OVERSIGHT: ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

COORDINATION – DELIVERY

COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP

Local Coordination
COUNCILS

Councils are responsible for coordinating recovery at the local level for affected individuals and communities.

Type of scale of event is within councils capability and capacity to lead recovery coordination and identify funding available.

Escalation
Increased complexity, scale and consequence

Regional Coordination
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS)

DHHS is responsible for coordinating relief and recovery at the regional level.

For incidents across multiple Councils, DHHS coordinates relief and recovery activities and reports up to state.

Escalation
Increased complexity, scale and consequence

State Coordination
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VICTORIA (EMV)

EMV is responsible for providing assurance to the Emergency Management Commissioner that relief and recovery activities are effective. For state-level incidents, EMV is responsible for coordinating recovery activities.

For incidents across multiple councils, the DHHS has a responsibility to coordinate recovery activities and report up to state.

RECOVERY ENVIRONMENTS

SOCIAL BUILT ECONOMIC NATURAL

SOCIAL BUILT ECONOMIC NATURAL

SOCIAL BUILT ECONOMIC NATURAL

DELIVERY

COUNCIL STATE AGENCIES NGO EXTERNAL –NGOS COMMUNITIES

COUNCIL STATE AGENCIES NGO EXTERNAL – NGOS COMMUNITIES

COUNCIL STATE AGENCIES NGO EXTERNAL – NGOS COMMUNITIES

ENABLERS

PLANNING

MEMP — ONGOING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING
Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

RECOVERY PLAN IN RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY

REMP — ONGOING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING
Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP)

RECOVERY PLAN IN RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY

SEMP — ONGOING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING
State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)

RECOVERY PLAN IN RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY

FUNDING

$ $ $ Includes funding of base level standing arrangements for recovery; reallocation of resources and services post an emergency event; cost sharing arrangements between State and Commonwealth through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA); additional services and surge capacity may require additional funding

COMMUNICATIONS

Delivery of relevant, clear and targeted communications with key stakeholders to provide consistent messaging across agencies and ensure issues are being addressed. Focuses on two way communication with communities.

INCIDENT JOINT PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

REGIONAL JOINT PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT JOINT PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Towards Resilient Recovery

The *Resilient Recovery Strategy* sets out a plan for the Victorian Government to improve how we deliver recovery services and ensure that individuals and communities are at the centre of recovery.

Outcomes framework

There is no timeframe for recovery. Recovery cannot be measured by how long it takes or by a definition of what a successful recovery looks like. It is impossible to return to a pre-disaster state. In many instances, people may never recover fully from a disaster. This can sometimes be a challenge to how the sector, with impacted communities, determines success in the recovery and the supporting recovery system.

Through the development of this strategy, community and government agreed there was a need for a shared set of Resilient Recovery Outcomes that guides recovery programs and the actions taken under this strategy to improve the Victorian recovery system.

These draw on broader outcomes that guide Victorian Government departments with key roles in recovery. Linking emergency recovery outcomes to broader Victorian Government outcomes highlights how recovery connects to other priorities of government and to our key partners in the sector. It also recognises how improved recovery approaches can contribute to the broader resilience of Victorians.

This strategy alone cannot achieve these outcomes, but it will contribute to them and provide a common goal for government departments and the recovery workforce.

These outcomes will help to focus what the Victorian Government wants to achieve in emergency recovery and will reflect our understanding of community impacts and values.

Strategic priorities

Embedded within the outcomes framework are four strategic priorities and the Victorian Government's commitment to tangible action. These reflect insights and lessons gained through research, national and international frameworks, reviews, inquiries and engagement.

Where possible, the agreed actions will build on and complement existing initiatives, to recommit and invest in what already works well across the state.

There is not one strategic priority or supporting action that will achieve the agreed outcomes. It is the collective delivery of all the actions within this strategy, and future actions yet to be determined, that will enable the sector to contribute towards the outcomes.

The *Resilient Recovery Strategy* has been developed through extensive consultation and engagement.

The focus and priorities have been adapted over time to reflect local feedback. The foundations of the outcomes and strategic priorities were set through an engagement process and a series of regional workshops delivered across Victoria to co-develop the strategy.

The current strategic priorities aim to represent the collective picture of local issues and priorities, with insights from over 400 participants from state and local government, community, non-government organisations, emergency services, academia and others.

There were strong themes identified through this engagement process including:

• working to ensure that all voices within the community can be heard and help shape the recovery

• streamlining and integrating services

• building capabilities at a local level

• drawing more on strengths that already exist within the area

• better supporting those that work in recovery.

These themes have been explored through further consultation and are represented as four strategic priorities in the strategy.

Table 1: Resilient Recovery Outcomes Framework

The Resilient Recovery Outcomes set an agreed direction to guide the Victorian Government's recovery programs and services:

VICTORIANS ARE SAFE, RESILIENT AND HEALTHY

VICTORIANS ARE CONNECTED TO PEOPLE, PLACES AND CULTURE

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES AND SERVICES ARE PEOPLE-CENTRED, ADAPTABLE AND SUSTAINABLE

VICTORIA HAS THRIVING REGIONS AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The Victorian Government will initially focus on four strategic priorities that we believe will see the most significant benefit towards contributing to our shared outcomes.

We will deliver these in consultation and partnership with councils and other critical recovery leaders and practitioners:

1. Deliver people and community-centred recovery

We will better recognise the individual and diverse needs within communities and deliver recovery engagement, planning and activities in partnership with all parts of the community.

2. Strengthen recovery through better emergency management planning

We will work to ensure that recovery thinking and planning is a focus in all stages of emergency management, and deliver planning and activities that support and enhance community resilience

3. Streamlined and flexible recovery system

We will streamline and improve the recovery operating system to create a more integrated approach that effectively delivers government services and can be scaled and tailored to better support communities.

4. Support the recovery workforce

We will build the skills and capabilities of our recovery workforce and support the wellbeing of all those who work in recovery.

How will we know we are succeeding?

The Victorian Government Outcomes Framework identifies a number of indicators through which we can track trends and progress against outcomes. These are not direct measures of recovery but indicators of how we are tracking in key areas such as mental health and wellbeing, connection to culture and communities and the impact from major emergencies on individuals, property and the environment. Trends in these themes can contribute to the success of recovery, as well as be influenced by our approach to recovery.

In addition, an Implementation Plan will further define when and how our agreed strategic actions are achieved. It will assign appropriate measures of success against those actions, ensuring that we continue to deliver resilient recovery initiatives in line with agreed outcomes.

1. Deliver people- and community-centred recovery

A community-centred approach allows individuals to play a greater role in their recovery. To achieve this, all levels of government must partner with community leaders, business, non-government organisations and others.

Individuals with strong and established local networks

have been identified as being more likely to be a part of initial recovery planning

and receive recovery communications and assistance after the disaster.

Highlighting that even when we consult with communities, we may only be connecting with the same groups of people.

This speaks volumes to the ways we engage with individuals within the community and ensure

that the 'quieter voices' are also part of the decision making, short and long-term.[1]

[1] IGEM, Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires, 2016

CASE STUDY:

Community emergency hubs – harnessing community capital

The Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO), New Zealand has flipped the command and control approach on its head. It now has a structure that links to and channels community capital in times of stress, meaning communities can better coordinate their own response.

This program recognises that communities will self-mobilise following an emergency and will want to be involved in their own recovery. The community emergency hubs provide the space and the tools for communities to come together to do what they can to help each other. The hubs promote a community-led response to the challenges they will face and provides a direct communication link with the official response.

Two-way communication is essential. The hubs give information to the official response which feeds into the situational awareness and allows resources to be distributed where they are most needed. Hubs also receive and spread key safety and public information messages from the official response back to the community.

This approach acknowledges that most people can solve problems in their everyday lives, and disasters simply present a different set of problems.

In partnership with councils, we will design and deliver the enabling structures and approaches to deepen community participation in recovery. This will draw on existing and emerging local networks to plan for recovery and co-design recovery programs.

Together, we will focus on building partnerships to deliver shared outcomes that reflect the needs of the community. This approach aims to enable and empower communities to lead their recovery more actively.

Local leadership

The unique circumstances of the post-disaster environment often identifies local leaders and defines roles within a community.

Effective recovery planning and governance models will better include local leaders, both established and those that emerge after an emergency. This can be improved through the consistent establishment and prior planning of the role of CRCs and the partnerships with councils in recovery.

These models will also better support councils to respond to the unique pressures they face, given their key roles in recovery and local partnerships.

To enable these models, all levels of government must engage with the diverse range of individuals that represent the community, before, during and after an emergency. Engagement should use existing community groups and governance to ensure it does not create additional burdens for impacted communities and individuals.

Place-based programs and accessible services

Councils, state government agencies and community organisations play a critical role in recovery through the coordination and delivery of support services. A community-centred approach ensures these services are accessible and tailored to the needs of the community, including the individuals, businesses, organisations and environments. This approach also allows us to provide the services and systems that individuals need, when they need it, as those affected by emergencies go through stages of recovery at different rates.

A people and community-centred model will focus on effective delivery of support services, integrating services with partners and using local capabilities.

On-going and authentic engagement will be led at place, bringing together relevant agencies and a breadth of community representatives. Place can have a very broad meaning, including residential places, economic and business environments, and the recreational and natural environments.

This engagement is important before, during and after an emergency to understand local risks, values and recovery priorities; as well as existing or changed relationships and interactions that make communities strong.

Conversations about recovery need to be part of a broader discussion on emergencies. This will be reflected in the way communities and emergency managers plan together, acknowledging that everyone has a role to play in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

1. Deliver people- and community-centred recovery

Actions

1.1. Establish clear and available points for individuals to connect with recovery services in a tailored, accessible, and integrated way

1.2. Ensure there are formal opportunities for community roles in recovery governance and planning, tailored to the context of the community and the event

1.3. Design and deliver recovery programs that are place-based, reflecting the community characteristics while mobilising and supporting local leaders

2. Strengthen recovery through better emergency management planning

The recovery journey starts shortly after the emergency, but the planning, preparing and consideration for recovery should begin long before the disaster occurs.

CASE STUDY:

Response and recovery in Anglesea – community-based planning

The local community in Anglesea is working together to better connect and build a safer and more resilient future for the local and broader community. This includes building on combined strengths to better plan for emergencies and manage stresses and shocks when emergencies occur.

The plan is locally-driven and underpinned by the Victorian Community-Based Emergency Management (CBEM) approach. Community members of all ages and abilities are encouraged to connect through the Anglesea Community Network. This network connects to schools, local groups and organisations to share information and drive community-led initiatives. The initiatives include engaging other communities and organisations to run emergency scenarios to better position the community and resources, so they are ready to cope and recover from emergencies and unforeseen events.

These processes also help give the community a stronger voice in influencing broader planning, community development and infrastructure decision making processes which affect them.

Better planning for emergencies is the collective responsibility of all levels of government and its agencies, businesses and communities. The recent introduction of the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* will see more comprehensive and integrated planning for emergencies incorporating preparedness, response and recovery thinking.

This planning, at state, regional and local levels, will bring community into the planning process before an emergency, and also draw on community involvement after an emergency to better incorporate community needs and values into recovery activities. This recognises the shared responsibility and collective action needed to build resilience to emergencies.

Planning for recovery

The *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* provides the avenue to incorporate recovery in all stages of emergency management.

Planning approaches will have a stronger outcomes-focus that more effectively involves community and key partners in decision-making. Planning will have better results if it considers local context and supports long-term community resilience. To do this, recovery planning should draw on broader regional and community development and resilience plans.

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities across all parts of the recovery system will also improve planning and outcomes. This will streamline the recovery system and help individuals prepare and plan for their own recovery ahead of an emergency.

Connecting plans and programs

Existing community development and planning programs can play a critical role in building community resilience. Even if they are not explicitly focused on emergency management, these programs help to enhance people's connections, skills and confidence. Emergency management planning committees should use the strengths of such information and programs when planning, responding and recovering from emergencies.

In addition, the planning regime should deliver timely, effective recovery plans both during an event and through the transition from the immediate emergency. This recovery planning will improve consistency and timeliness of recovery, providing support and advice to individuals, communities, partners and government.

2. Strengthen recovery through better emergency management planning

Actions

2.1 Establish planning processes for all stages of emergencies, across state, regional and municipal scales (implementing the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018*)

2.2 Establish clear processes and guidance for scalable post-disaster recovery planning, based on impact and consequence assessment and community input

2.3 Create clear roles, responsibilities and processes for community input into planning processes

3. Streamlined and flexible recovery system

Quickly connecting with service providers and communities to identify resource and service needs will enhance the confidence of recovery leaders to act early and effectively. The enablers of the recovery system – planning, funding and communications – are key in supporting recovery practitioners to act quickly and decisively. This strategy focuses on improving these arrangements and ensuring greater coordination.

CASE STUDY:

Rapid risk assessment

The Rapid Risk Assessment Teams (RRATs) are multi-disciplinary Victorian Government teams with specialist skills who rapidly identify, assess, prioritise and evaluate risks on public land after an emergency.

RRATs provide valuable early information on impacts, risks and actions to support recovery on public land. Their assessment helps to minimise further threat to life, property, critical infrastructure and the environment following an emergency incident.

Teams are made up of specialists who assess biodiversity (flora and fauna), built assets, cultural heritage, flooding and erosion, forest management and are supported by mapping to assess impacted areas.

Within seven days they produce a report for the public land managers that identifies priority risks and practical treatment solutions, helping more timely and effective recovery planning and delivery.

The RRATs process and report gives the land manager a clearer picture of what is required after an incident, helping more timely and effective recovery planning and delivery.

We will build on the strengths of the current recovery system and best practice examples at local level, focusing on improving coordination and responsiveness, planning, assurance and evaluation.

Streamlining recovery

Improved operating processes and clearer, more timely resourcing and actions will produce better outcomes within the current system.

A review is required of the resourcing and funding for existing recovery arrangements to ensure that critical support is available when it is needed.

Developing resourcing arrangements that establish immediate recovery funding for identified early recovery actions will build the confidence of recovery leaders and allow them to act early and effectively.

Developing flexible resource and workforce arrangements to support councils and communities through longer-term recovery will enable communities and recovery partners to build resilience through their recovery where possible.

Working with councils, we aim to deliver a recovery system that is more streamlined and provides more timely and tailored services and support for those who need it, when they need it.

Flexible recovery

Improved recovery thinking during an emergency, and in the transition from short-term to longer-term recovery, will also enhance outcomes.

This requires using good-quality information to guide planning and delivery. Critical elements include accessible, accurate and timely impact and consequence assessments, with information on community characteristics (such as community resilience factors, municipal planning scheme aspirations and data, and land management plans) to guide recovery decision making.

Recovery actions and programs are largely specific to the recovery context and may require government to develop and deliver new or different support services that fit local needs. This means that the resources and capabilities required to deliver place-based services are not always the same. The system must be scalable and be able to handle surges of demand with an emphasis on early actions, local-level recovery and control, and escalation when needed.

The recovery system should enhance and build on the current strengths while recognising the need for flexibility.

An effective system for emergency recovery will reflect a community-centred approach, while remaining flexible and well-supported at all levels and through all phases of emergencies.

3. Streamlined and flexible recovery system

Actions

3.1 Strengthen the Impact Assessment approach to provide more timely and accurate intelligence to inform recovery needs

3.2 Review funding arrangements to provide more streamlined, sustainable and responsive recovery for individuals, environments and places in need

3.3 Develop and implement a Monitoring, Evaluation and Assurance Framework that includes lessons management and is supported by best-practice

We will build on the strengths

of the current recovery system and best practice examples at local level

4. Support those who work in recovery

Disaster recovery work is often intense. The need to provide services during uncertain times and in rapidly changing situations increases acute and ongoing stress for recovery workers. People may continue working in recovery long after an emergency, often providing support to individuals and communities experiencing ongoing distress and trauma. Exposure to direct and indirect trauma and long periods of intense emotional engagement can weigh heavily on recovery workers.

CASE STUDY:

DELWP Wellbeing Hub – Supporting recovery workers

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Recovery Team has recognised the potential psychological impacts of recovery work on their recovery workforce. There are many factors that contribute to these impacts such as long-term fatigue and complex community engagement. Recognising that these are likely to continue to be components of working in recovery, the team saw an opportunity to improve the way the department supported its staff.

In 2018, the team developed a package of tools to support mental health and wellbeing for DELWP staff, including psychological first aid training across the state with a specific recovery focus for those who work in disaster-impacted communities. The project has provided recovery workers a safe place to connect with each other through an online Recovery Wellbeing Hub which contains video stories, advice from experienced recovery workers and links to support services and other useful information.

Through this project, the team were able to raise awareness of the risks to the mental health after emergencies and the impact on staff and to the organisation. The project reflects a shift in the department and across the sector that better recognises the importance of the recovery workforce and the demanding work they do.

Individuals who work in recovery, professionals and volunteers, may come from any part of society, not just the emergency management sector. This diversity is a strength but also presents challenges to ensuring that workers from across multiple sectors are well supported when working in recovery.

This strategy aims to better connect and enhance existing support and wellbeing programs across the sector to ensure appropriate support for all those working in recovery. The necessary frameworks and structures will also be established to more consistently build and share recovery capabilities across government and the state

Keeping people safe and well

The challenges and impacts of working in recovery need to be better recognised. More needs to be done to recognise individual, community and local contributions of the recovery workforce, and the critical importance of their roles.

Continued learning from other professions with similar pressures (such as social work and medicine) is essential, as is identifying ways to support people to build their personal resilience. This will involve a broader system of support, networking and recognition for all recovery leaders; including community leaders, local partners and other recovery practitioners.

Keeping people safe and well over the long term should be everyone's priority.

Networks, skills and knowledge

To support people to continue to do a great job, investment in the recovery workforce is critical, including building the skills and knowledge needed to work in these environments. It is also important to recognise the often extended nature of recovery activities and the need to maintain these capabilities long-term.

At a community and practitioner level, this means improved connections through formal networks that aim to better support people to share their lessons and experiences. All those working in recovery should continue to strive to improve recovery practices by applying the lessons learned from across Victoria, Australia and internationally.

Within state and local government, stronger recovery capabilities also need to be built and embedded in all stages of emergency management.

Many councils and government agencies have valuable recovery experience, capabilities and relationships at the local level. There are also existing resource sharing models to support various levels of government in delivery of their services. However, continued investment in recovery capabilities and networks can be challenging, depending on the frequency of emergency events that the council experiences.

Expanding and strengthening the network of the recovery workforce who can be mobilised across the state can help to bolster capabilities when needed. Having a skilled, supported recovery workforce available at the right times, and for the long term, will drive more timely and effective services throughout the recovery process.

4. Support the recovery workforce

Actions

4.1. Develop a wellbeing program for all recovery leaders and practitioners to better support the wellbeing of those working in recovery

4.2. Develop a formal network for all recovery leaders and practitioners to share knowledge, experience and learnings

4.3. Establish a capabilities framework for state and local government recovery practitioners that aligns to broader emergency management capability

4.4. Enhance approaches for resource sharing across the sector to support longer-term recovery

Taking the strategy forward

Through this strategy, the Victorian Government has committed to a series of priority actions to be delivered within the first stages of implementation. These actions will be further detailed within a comprehensive Implementation Plan, including agreement to the responsibilities by lead agencies, partnerships in delivery, timing and prioritisation.

This strategy will guide the work of agencies in their recovery programs and set ambitious, but important, expectations of government.

Measures

The supporting Resilient Recovery Implementation Plan will assign appropriate indicators and measures of success against the agreed actions within the *Resilient Recovery Strategy*.

Annual reporting will occur on the progress of the resilient recovery program of actions and Implementation Plan. Review of this work will be considered under a continuous improvement model to ensure relevance and continued alignment to this Strategy and the agreed outcomes within.

Associated programs and projects may have specific monitoring and evaluation requirements at project level but should inform the broader program reporting where possible.

Oversight

The State Crisis and Resilience Council will oversee and monitor the delivery of key actions within the strategy, recognising its whole-of-government intention. It is proposed that Emergency Management Victoria will provide support in implementation planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Complementary initiatives

The emergency management sector in Victoria, across Australia and internationally has been working on building more meaningful community involvement, more effective partnerships and stronger recovery arrangements.

The *Resilient Recovery Strategy* aims to build on and complement this work by:

• considering and aligning to community, council and regional development or resilience initiatives such as the *Resilient Melbourne Strategy* and the *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*

• recognising achievements and opportunities to leverage community-centred engagement programs such as Safer Together

• working closely with interdependent initiatives and programs such as the Councils and Emergencies program.

In addition, the direction provided under the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* will establish the foundation for community focus and improvement to recovery outcomes, through formal planning arrangements that reflect the importance of community participation in emergency management planning. The implementation of these planning amendments will be a primary channel to deliver key actions of this strategy.

Glossary

Acute shocks

Sudden, sharp events that can threaten individuals, households and communities. These include bushfire, floods, earthquakes, disease outbreaks and shared trauma events such as acts of extreme violence.

Chronic stresses

Long-term issues weaken the fabric of communities on a daily or cyclical basis. Examples include: high unemployment, inefficient public transport system, poor health, endemic violence, food or water shortages and the impact of climate change.

Communities

A group sharing common characteristics, attributes or interests including communities of place (such as a township or locality) and communities of interest (such as faith, club, business or virtual). Individuals belong to many communities at any one time and these are constantly changing and evolving.

Consequence

Changes in circumstances experienced by individuals, communities, businesses, industry or infrastructure which are the result of an emergency event.

Cultural Heritage

The legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of Aboriginal Australians that is inherited from past generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture, intangible culture, and natural heritage.

Disaster/Emergency

A situation where people need immediate assistance to cope with an acute shock. This includes all forms of emergencies, natural or otherwise. The use of the terms interchangeably recognise the differing terminology used across government and non-government organisations, interstate and by the Commonwealth.

Impact assessment

The analysis of the consequences of an event, including psychosocial (emotional and social), economic, natural and built environment.

Public Land Manager

Departments, organisations and agencies that are legislated to manage and control public land on behalf of the Crown, governments and communities, past, present and future. This can also refer to appointed trustees, a committee of management, Minister or Secretary.

The land can refer to national parks, state forests, coastal crown land and land reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Recovery context

The considerations to be taken into account when managing consequence of impacts from an emergency.

Recovery practitioners or recovery workers

All individuals and organisations that work in or contribute to recovery, both formal and informal, directly and indirectly.

Recovery system

The way in which individuals, communities, businesses and industry work together, supported by all levels of government and community organisations to recover from an emergency.

Resilience

The capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses or acute shocks they experience.

Sector

All levels of government, departments and agencies and organisations that work together to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Self-mobilise

An individual and communities' ability to organise and take initiative independent of any formal support or guidance.

Shared responsibility

A common understanding that communities and organisations have significant roles to play in building resilience before, during and after emergencies. This includes increasing capacity and capability for individuals, households and communities to take greater responsibility for their own safety and resilience levels; together with the appropriate support from emergency services, government, business, industry and non-government organisations.

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Working in conjunction with communities,
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