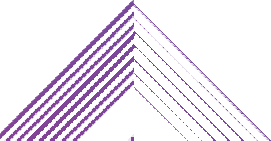
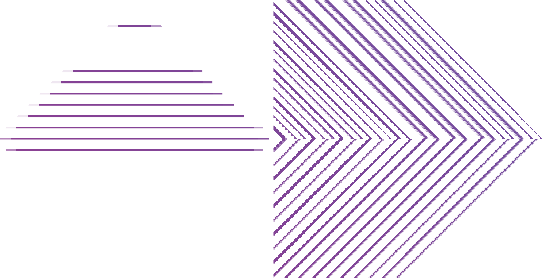
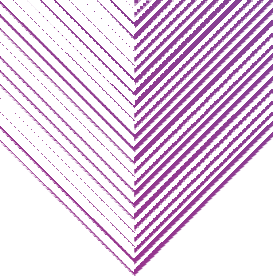
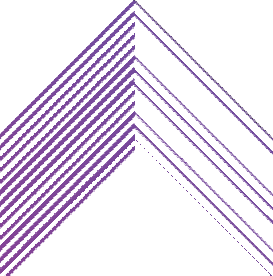
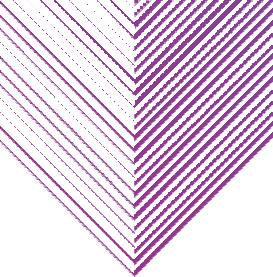
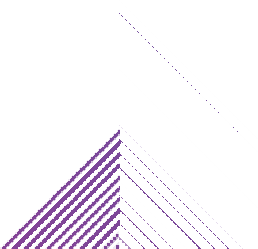
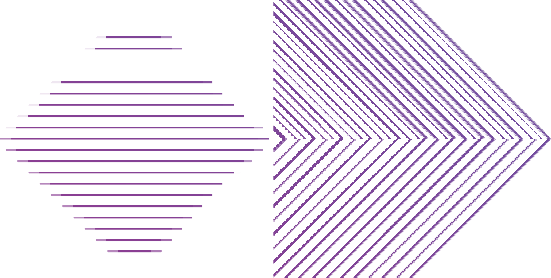
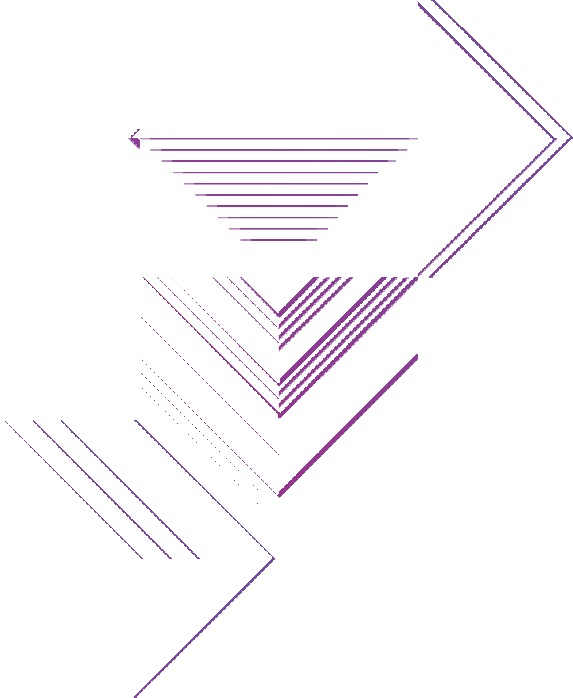
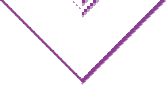
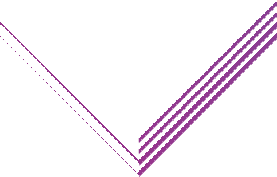
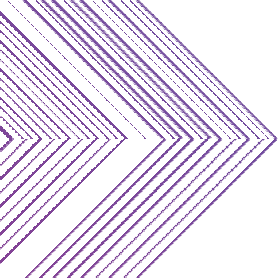
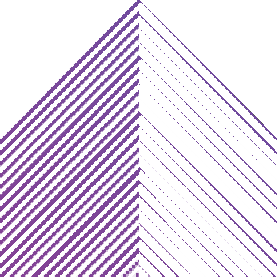
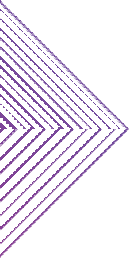
2015–16 Annual Assurance Summary



### The Year in Review

Inspector-General for Emergency Management

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# Foreword

Assurance activities, including inquiries, reviews, and monitoring, can provide evidence that increases the confidence of government and the community in the ability of the emergency management system to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies. They also highlight areas where improvements can be made.

Over the years, numerous emergency management assurance reports of varying scale have been produced by emergency management sector organisations or independent entities.

The findings of these reports can sometimes be related or have interdependencies. Despite this, a consolidated overview of sector assurance activities has not been commonplace.

With the establishment and progressive implementation of more joined up emergency management arrangements under the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and subsequent amendments, it is timely and valuable to bring together the outcomes of sector assurance activities to provide a synopsis of performance and risks. It is also important to record sector progress against the vision outlined in the *Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper*.

To fulfil this purpose, the Annual Assurance Summary will be produced every year by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) under the *Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management*.

The 2015–16 Annual Assurance Summary complements IGEM’s established review and monitoring programs and as such does not make any recommendations or create any additional layers of reporting.

IGEM acknowledges that it is not possible to capture every sector assurance activity in this report. However the activities reflected here are of fundamental importance to assurance of overarching emergency management arrangements.

This summary report will evolve as sector assurance processes mature and to reflect the ever changing economic, social and environmental changes and the demands this places on communities and the sector.

I thank our emergency management partners for their continued support and commitment to continuous improvement across the sector.

##### Tony Pearce

Inspector-General for Emergency Management

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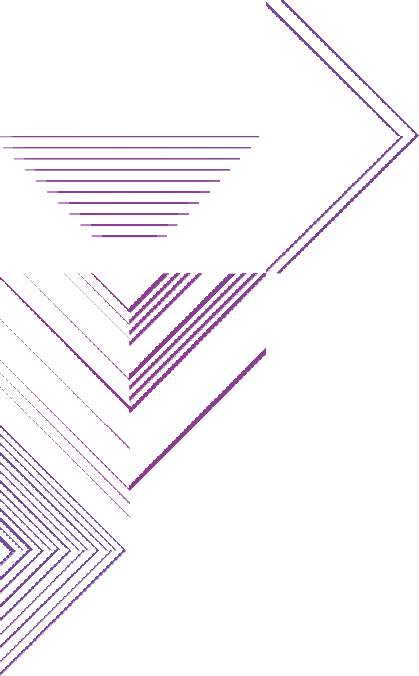
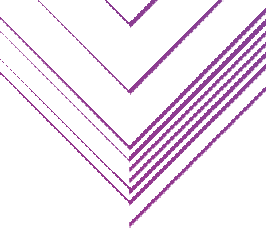
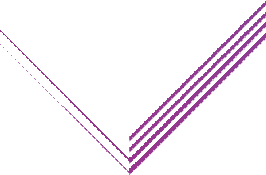
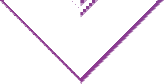
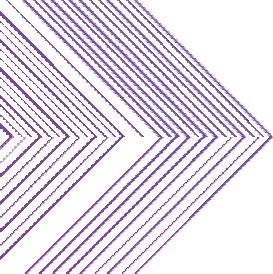
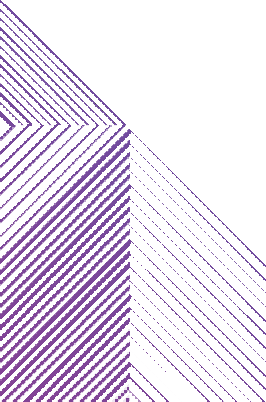
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Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CFA** | Country Fire Authority |
| **DELWP** | Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning |
| **DHHS** | Department of Health and Human Services |
| **DPC** | Department of Premier and Cabinet |
| **EMC** | Emergency Management Commissioner |
| **EMV** | Emergency Management Victoria |
| **ESLG** | Emergency Services Leadership Group |
| **ESTA** | Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority |
| **IGEM** | Inspector-General for Emergency Management |
| **LGV** | Local Government Victoria |
| **MERP** | Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program |
| **SAP** | Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan |
| **SCRC** | State Crisis and Resilience Council |
| **VBRC** | Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission |
| **VICSES** | Victoria State Emergency Service |

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# Executive summary

Victoria’s emergency management sector conducts a range of assurance activities – such as inquiries, reviews and monitoring – to support the continuous improvement of emergency management in Victoria.

Outcomes from assurance activities provide evidence to government and the community of the emergency management sector’s ability to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Assurance activities may also highlight areas where improvements can be made.

The Annual Assurance Summary draws together and provides examples of significant assurance activities relating to the overarching emergency management arrangements in Victoria. Primarily, these are undertaken by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM), Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and independent bodies. Assurance activities undertaken by emergency management organisations also contribute to broader system level assurance.

## 8

### The year in assurance

To assure government and the community that improvement initiatives are being implemented as planned, IGEM has a substantial monitoring program examining implementation of recommendations and actions from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, the 2013–14 Fire Season Compliance Report, the independent investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw 2015 fire, and the 2014 Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry.

In addition, under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, IGEM monitors and reports to the Minister for Emergency Services on the implementation of the *Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015–18* [1].

Each issue specific monitoring report details the progress of the implementation of improvements and where appropriate, commentary on their effectiveness and sustainability.

2015–16 saw the sector undertake a broad range of assurance activities to support continuous improvement and provide detailed analysis of given emergency management themes and topics. While it is not possible to capture all activities in this summary report, assurance activities undertaken by all sector organisations are of vital importance and provide critical information for evidence-based decision making and drive improved performance.

IGEM undertook five reviews during 2015 and the early stages of 2016 which examined themes before, during and after emergencies. Three of these reviews were undertaken proactively under IGEM’s *Annual Forward Plan of Reviews* [2, 3] and a further two by Ministerial request.

With respect to before emergencies occur, an important area of focus during the period was planned burning, a key mitigation strategy for managing bushfire fuel loads. IGEM’s 2015 review of performance targets for bushfire fuel management on public land, followed by the independent investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw 2015 fire, provided the evidence base for the Victorian Government’s new approach to reducing the risk and consequences of bushfire as articulated in *Safer Together* [4].

EMV’s *Emergency Management Operational Review 2014–15* [5, 6], IGEM’s *Review of the initial response to the 2015 Wye River – Jamieson Track Fire* [7] and the independent *Report*

*of the Victorian Fire Services Review* [8] all provided valuable insights and recommendations or actions to enable more effective and efficient emergency response, not only with respect to fire management but with broader relevance.

Following the bushfire events at Wye River, Separation Creek, Scotsburn and Barnawartha, government established a dedicated Cabinet committee, the Disaster Recovery Sub- Committee. This committee oversees recovery works when

significant emergencies occur, including bushfires, floods and storms. This was underpinned by considerable work to support the transition of state level relief and recovery arrangements from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Emergency Management Commissioner.

### 2015–16 reform agenda highlights

Reform of emergency management in Victoria is well underway. IGEM commends the significant progress that the sector has made in delivering on the intent of the *Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper* during 2015–16, including:

* establishing new critical infrastructure resilience arrangements to build the resilience of Victoria’s assets, systems and networks such as communications, energy, food, health, transport and water
* progressing legislative amendment to provide for new integrated emergency management planning arrangements at the state, regional and municipal levels
* passing the *Emergency Management (Control of Response Activities and Other Matters) Act 2015* through Parliament, strengthening arrangements to maximise the ability of response agencies in managing emergencies
* introducing the first tranche of the Emergency Management Performance Standards, which provide responder agencies with shared objectives and minimum requirements for their emergency management functions
* releasing the *Strategic priorities for emergency management volunteering in Victoria* [9] to express common needs across emergency management volunteering
* commencing the development of a process, data platform and system to authorise, collect, analyse and communicate initial and secondary impact data, to better inform relief and recovery planning and activities.

### Conclusion

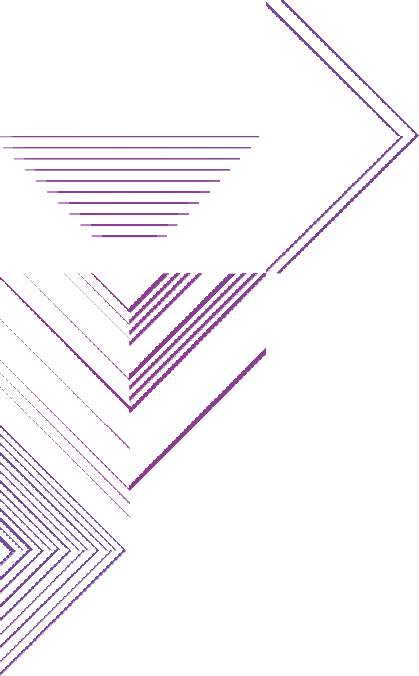
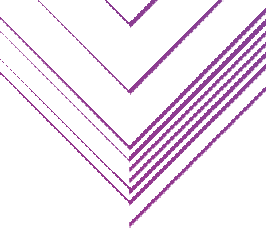
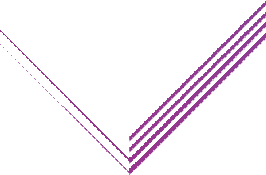
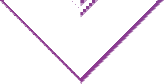
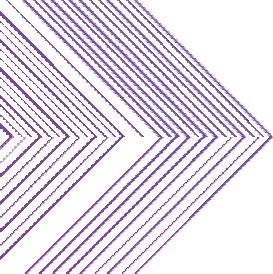
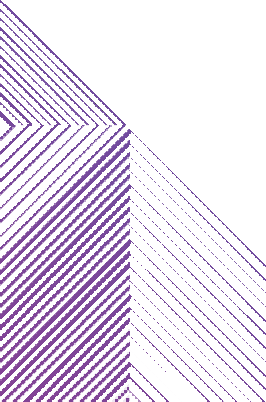
IGEM commends all sector organisations for their continued commitment to implementing reforms and to continuous improvement of emergency management in Victoria.

The ongoing contribution of these organisations to assurance contributes to improved future decision making and a sustainable and efficient emergency management system.

Additionally, it supports management of risks and performance improvement specific to the individual organisations.

IGEM will continue to report on system performance, risks and progress against the reform agenda in the next Annual Assurance Summary in 2017.

**2015–16 Annual Assurance Summary**



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# Background

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM)

is a legislated appointment established under the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act) to:

* provide assurance to government and the community in respect of emergency management arrangements in Victoria
* foster continuous improvement of emergency management in Victoria.

The Act requires IGEM to develop and maintain a monitoring and assurance framework for emergency management, against which the capacity, capability and performance of the emergency management sector (the sector) is to be assessed.

In accordance with this role and to provide a consolidated view of sector performance, risks and progress against the reform agenda, IGEM produces an Annual Assurance Summary. This is the inaugural Annual Assurance Summary report.

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### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a high-level summary of sector performance, risks and progress against the sector reform agenda. Its primary audience is the Minister for Emergency Services (the Minister).

### Introduction

Victoria has endured a number of significant emergencies that have resulted in significant social, environmental and economic impacts.

The sector conducts a range of assurance activities such as monitoring and reviews, routinely or in response to these specific events to support the continuous improvement of emergency management in Victoria.

Outcomes from such assurance activities provide evidence that increases the confidence of government and the community in the ability of the emergency management sector to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies as well as highlight areas where improvements can be made.

Historically it has not been commonplace to provide a consolidated overview of assurance activities, however doing so is considered valuable to identify any commonalities and serve as a record of sector progress over time.

### Scope

This report consolidates results from key assurance activities undertaken by sector organisations and independent bodies against the overarching emergency management risk and resilience, capability and response and relief and recovery arrangements in Victoria.

This report is a high-level summary that highlights incidents of note and key assurance activities undertaken during 2015–16.

### Approach

This report has been prepared in accordance with the principles outlined in the *Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management* (the Framework)[10]. The Framework defines assurance as providing government and the community with confidence in the ability of the emergency management system to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

As such, this report draws upon and consolidates information collected through a range of sector-wide and system level assurance activities. While inquiries, reviews and monitoring are key mechanisms for providing assurance, other activities and outputs delivered by the sector also contribute to increasing the confidence government and communities. These may include the development of policies, strategies and plans for major or emerging risks that have been identified by the sector.

IGEM considered and incorporated key information sources to inform a high-level sector assurance summary. Due to the breadth of potential information sources and the volume of relevant reports produced, it was not possible for IGEM to incorporate all available information into this report.

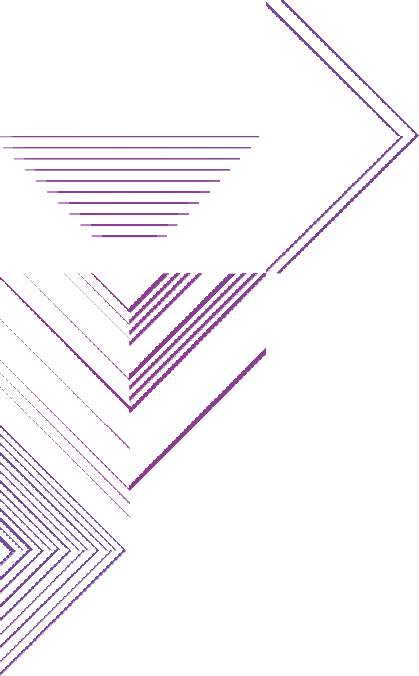
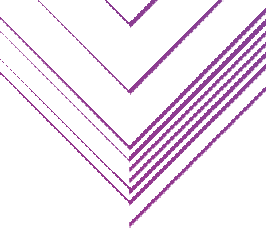
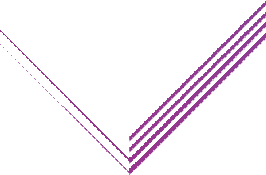
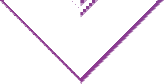
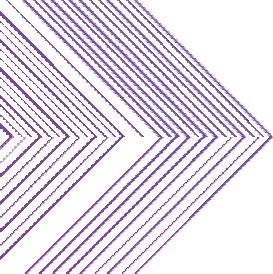
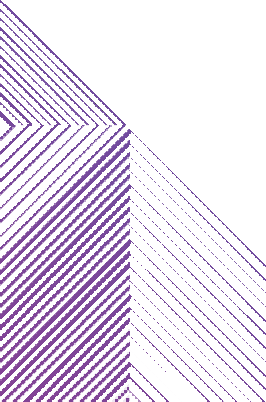
To minimise burden on sector organisations, no additional information collection was conducted. All information was leveraged entirely from existing sector-wide or system level assurance reports and sources.

As organisational level assurance processes tend to focus on capacity, capability and performance within a specific organisation, focus has been placed on consolidating findings from existing IGEM and Emergency Management Victoria

(EMV) assurance reports and activities. Sources of information used to inform this report are listed in the bibliography.

This report does not make any recommendations or create any additional layers of reporting.

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The Year in Review

# Emergency management in Victoria

Victoria has a long history of emergencies, each with different characteristics, challenges and consequences. Over the past decade this has included animal health incidents, fires, floods, hazardous materials incidents, heatwaves, locust plague, road/ rail incidents, severe storms and tornadoes.

These and other incidents have generated devastating losses and considerable social, economic and environmental impacts. They also demonstrate that emergencies can occur at any time and be triggered by natural or human factors.

The shared vision for emergency management in Victoria is *safer and more resilient communities* with the shared goal of a *sustainable and efficient emergency management system that reduces the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies*.

It is recognised that this shared vision and goal can only be achieved through all agencies, departments, industry, business, all levels of government and community working together as one.

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### Governance

The overarching Victorian emergency management governance structure depicted in Figure 1 was reformed with the establishment of the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) and its sub-committees following the commencement of the Act on 1 July 2014.

To drive a more integrated approach to governance, the SCRC was established as Victoria’s peak body to develop and coordinate policy and strategy across the emergency management spectrum and to oversee its implementation.

SCRC membership is comprised of the:

* Secretaries of each government department
* Chief Commissioner of Police
* Chief Executive of Emergency Management Victoria
* Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC)
* Inspector-General for Emergency Management (as an observer)
* Chief Executive Officer of the Municipal Association of Victoria (as the representative of local government).

SCRC is supported by three sub-committees: Risk and Resilience; Capability and Response; and Relief and Recovery. SCRC and its sub-committees meet no less than quarterly.

They ensure integration and cohesion across the sector and enable the government to deliver its broader reform agenda.

The SCRC sub-committees comprise membership from a broad range of organisations with a role in emergency management.

Despite the relative infancy of these overarching governance arrangements, EMV undertook a review of emergency management committee structures and processes during 2015–16. The review underlines the sector’s commitment to continuous improvement and enhancing Victoria’s overarching emergency management governance arrangements.

The primary vehicle guiding the emergency management reform agenda is the *Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015–18* (SAP) [1]. It was developed by the Victorian Government under the auspices of SCRC, and the three SCRC sub-committees champion its delivery.

The Emergency Services Leadership Group (ESLG), chaired by EMV and attended by agency Chief Executive Officers, contributed to the development of the SAP and ensures delivery of relevant elements to achieve the most effective and efficient outcome for the State. The ESLG is an administrative body, which determines its own remit.

The SAP complements the functions and work of sector organisations that are delivered as part of their ‘business as usual’ activities. This includes communities, business, governments and agencies working together to strengthen emergency management arrangements and deliver positive outcomes for all Victorians. It is a rolling plan which will be reviewed annually to realise opportunities and meet the future challenges.

In early 2016, government established a dedicated Cabinet committee, the Disaster Recovery Sub-Committee, to oversee recovery arrangements when significant emergencies occur, including bushfires, floods and storms. This included implementing recovery programs for the recent bushfires

that affected Wye River, Separation Creek, Scotsburn and Barnawartha.

**Figure 1:** Overarching Victorian emergency management governance structure

Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet

Chair: Premier

Secretariat: Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)

Disaster Recovery Sub-Committee

Chair: Premier Secretariat: DPC

#### 

Minister for Emergency Services

Other Ministers

State Crisis and Resilience Council

Chair: Secretary, DPC Secretariat: DPC

Risk and Resilience Sub-Committee

Secretariat: EMV

Capability and Response Sub-Committee

Secretariat: EMV

Relief and Recovery Sub-Committee

Secretariat: EMV

**2015–16 Annual Assurance Summary**

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### Operating context

Victoria entered 2015 with an expectation of heightened fire activity. While bush, grass, scrub and structure fires were prevalent across the state, other major incidents such as storms, flash flooding and heatwaves also took place.

Figure 2 is not an exhaustive account of all incidents during the period, but aims to illustrate the broad range of challenges faced by Victorian communities and the sector. These incidents are current examples of the diversity of emergencies over a short period. Due to the nature of the hazards, their geographic location and variety of impacts, they are complex to manage and can stretch the collective capacity of the sector.

**Figure 2:** Selected emergency events January 2015–May 2016

Jan 2015 Edenhope, Hastings and Moyston fires

Dec 2015 Barnawartha and Scotsburn fires

Dec 2015 Wye River, Separation Creek and Otway Coast fires

Jan 2016 Geelong flash flooding

Jan 2016 Spirit of Tasmania II ferry incident

Feb 2016 Somerville and Mt Bolton fires

Jan – Feb 2016 Mar 2016 – Present Bomb hoaxes Murray River blue-green targeting schools algae outbreak

Nov 2015 Somerton tip fire

Nov 2015 Export ship fire at Portland

Aug 2015 Southbank crane collapse

**January 15**

February 15

March 15

April 15

May 15

June 15

July 15

August 15

September 15

October 15

November 15

December 15

January 16

February 16

March 16

April 16

**May 16**

Victoria’s emergency management arrangements include provisions for resource supplementation from interstate or internationally. This also provides opportunities for valuable experience and learning that is brought back and shared to further strengthen Victoria’s emergency management capability.

Figure 3 provides an overview of the support provided and received by Victoria throughout 2015 and early parts of 2016.

**Figure 3:** Support provided and received by the sector from January 2015– February 2016

Jan 2015 NSW provided support to Victorian firefighters in parts of western, central and north-east Victoria

Jan 2015 Victoria provided support to SA fires

Feb 2015 Victoria provided support to WA fires

**January 15**

February 15

March 15

April 15

May 15

June 15

July 15

August 15

September 15

October 15

November 15

December 15

January 16

**February 16**

Apr 2015 Victoria provided support to NSW after severe weather, storms and flooding caused significant damage across NSW and southern QLD

Jul 2015 Victoria provided support to Canada to combat fires

Sep 2015 Victoria

provided support to USA to combat fires

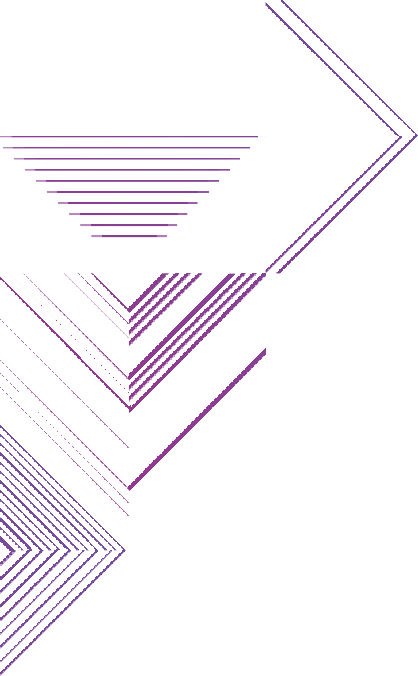
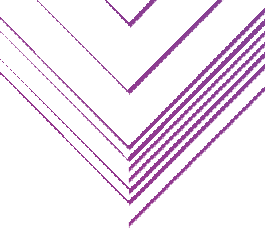
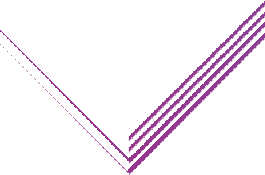
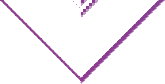
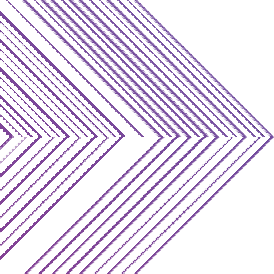
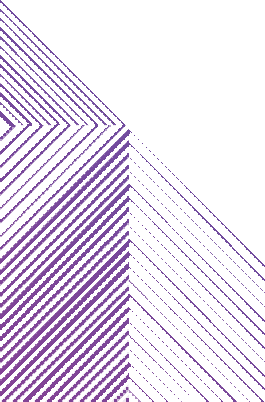
Nov 2015 ACT firefighters provided support to Victorian firefighters during the management of the Somerton tip

Nov 2015 Victoria provided support to SA to combat fires

Jan 2016 NSW and New Zealand provided support to Victorian firefighters in Otway Coast

Jan 2016 Victoria provided support to Tasmania to combat fires

# Monitoring implementation of improvements across the



emergency management system

Assurance activities are vital to ensure Victoria’s emergency management system operates effectively to help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

This section seeks to summarise the monitoring activities undertaken by IGEM for actions and recommendations from key assurance reports. These reports span across the spectrum of risk and resilience, capability and response and relief and recovery. Subsequent sections of this report focus on activities with a specific emphasis on each of these three phases of emergency management.

IGEM acknowledges the effort, dedication and progress of the sector in implementing the actions and recommendations from numerous reviews and inquiries throughout 2015 and into 2016. This is reflected in the findings of the major implementation reports outlined in this section.

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### Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

– 2015 Progress Report

In August 2015, IGEM released its first report examining the sector’s progress in implementing the ongoing actions from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Implementation Monitor’s 2014 final report. Of the total 21 ongoing actions, IGEM found that eight actions were complete, two were closed, and expected the remaining 11 actions to be completed within the following 12 months.

Key achievements outlined in IGEM’s progress report included:

* the completion of the Resilient Community Program (formerly Fire Ready Communities), with projects including local government planning, community education and programs to build community networks
* significant progress in implementing reforms to Victoria’s emergency management planning arrangements, which when fully implemented will provide enhanced governance arrangements at all levels to enable integrated all hazards emergency management planning across Victoria
* further progress in delivering the Powerline Bushfire Safety Program aimed at reducing the likelihood of Victoria’s electricity distribution system causing a catastrophic bushfire in the future.

Please refer to the *Progress Report, Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Implementation of recommendations and actions* [11] for IGEM’s detailed findings on the implementation progress of the 21 ongoing Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC) actions. IGEM will prepare a 2016 progress report

to be provided to government in the second half of 2016.

### Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Implementation Monitor – 2015 Annual Report

In response to the 2014 Hazelwood Mine Fire event, which resulted in significant health and economic impacts for Latrobe Valley communities, a Board of Inquiry was established to inquire into, report on and make any recommendations that it considered appropriate in relation to:

* the origin and the circumstances of the fire
* the adequacy and effectiveness of fire management measures taken by the mine owner, operator and licence holder ENGIE (formerly GDF SUEZ)
* the adequacy and effectiveness of the application and administration of relevant regulatory regimes
* the adequacy and effectiveness of the response to the fire by the owner, operator and licensee and all relevant agencies, including informing affected communities and responding to the effects on and risks to, the affected communities
* any other relevant related matters.

The Board of Inquiry made 18 recommendations and affirmed 57 additional commitments (affirmations) made by the State and ENGIE to improve their emergency management arrangements for the future.

IGEM, together with the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Implementation Monitor, were assigned responsibility for reporting on the implementation progress of recommendations and associated affirmations.

The *Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2015* [12], which includes IGEM’s annual report, was released in November 2015. The Implementation Monitor and IGEM found positive progress by the State and ENGIE in implementing the recommendations and affirmations.

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Victoria’s emergency management reforms are still ongoing, a number of Inquiry recommendations and affirmations will not be fully complete until emergency management reforms are fully implemented.

Please refer to the full *Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2015* [12] for the Implementation Monitor and IGEM’s detailed findings on the implementation progress of the 18 recommendations and 57 affirmations.

In May 2015, government reopened the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry. The new terms of reference focused on human health impacts and mine rehabilitation. In April 2016, the Board of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry delivered the fourth and final volume of its report.

From 16 March 2016, IGEM assumed responsibility for reporting on the implementation progress of all recommendations and associated affirmations emanating from the 2014 Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Report. In the 2016–17 State Budget, released on 27 April 2016, it was announced that IGEM would monitor and report on progress in implementing all recommendations and affirmations from the 2014 and 2015–16 reopened Inquiry Reports. IGEM will prepare a 2016 annual report for government in the second half of 2016.

### Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015–18 Annual Progress Report

To meet its obligation under section 64(1)(e) of the Act, IGEM reports to government on the SAP’s implementation progress biannually – an interim report and an annual report. IGEM provided its first interim report to government on the implementation progress of the SAP in December 2015. In May 2016, IGEM delivered its first annual progress report to government.

The SAP, released in July 2015, comprises 30 state-level strategic actions aimed at enhancing Victoria’s emergency management system. These strategic actions vary in complexity, duration and resource requirements, and span across four themes:

* Communities and business
* People and culture
* Governance
* Services and systems.

The SAP, containing details on all 30 strategic actions, can be viewed on EMV’s website.

In the first annual progress report, IGEM found that 22 of the 30 strategic actions are progressing satisfactorily, which are at varying levels of planning, scoping or implementation.

The remaining eight actions are scheduled to commence by 2017–18.

IGEM will continue to monitor and report on the implementation of the SAP.

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### Interim Progress Report: Implementation of recommendations and commitments following the Independent Investigation of

the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire 2016

In November 2015, an independent investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw fire was released by government. This independent inquiry, led by Mr Murray Carter (Director of the Office of Bushfire Risk Management in Western Australia), contained 22 recommendations.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) accepted and will implement all 22 recommendations and 10 additional commitments as part of a work program that also encompasses implementing a community centred vision as articulated in *Safer Together*. For assurance purposes, IGEM commenced monitoring the implementation of the work program as well as managing the prompt investigation and reporting of future breaches of planned burn containment lines.

In February 2016, IGEM released its findings on the implementation status of the 22 recommendations and 10 commitments following the Lancefield-Cobaw independent investigation.

In the first interim report, IGEM found that DELWP is making satisfactory progress. One recommendation and three commitments had been completed, with the remainder reported by DELWP as being on track for completion by their due dates.

Please refer to the full *Interim Progress Report: Implementation of recommendations and commitments following the Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire 2016* [13] for the detailed findings and commentary around the implementation status of the 22 recommendations and 10 commitments.

IGEM will continue to report to the government on the progress of recommendations and commitments during 2016.

### 2013–14 Fire Season Compliance Report – 2015 Progress Update

IGEM delivered the initial compliance report [14] to government in October 2014. This report examined the implementation status of agreed actions from three 2013–14 fire season reports1.

These actions related to improvements to road traffic management, community involvement, initial attack and utilisation of resources, cross-border fire arrangements and other systemic issues.

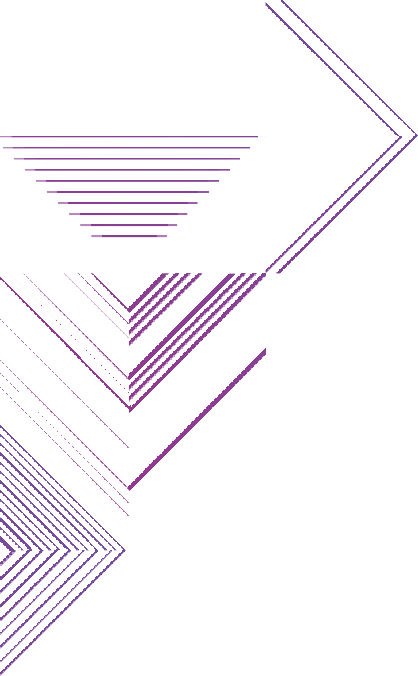
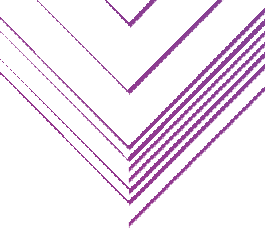
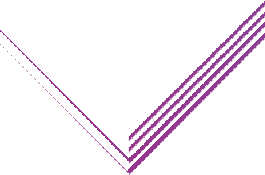
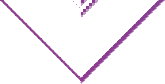
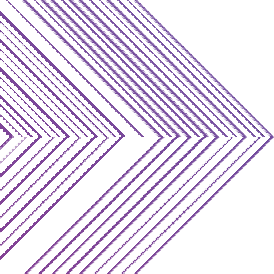
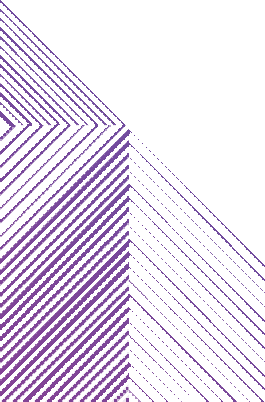
In August 2015, IGEM released its 2015 Progress Update and found that out of the 86 actions and 10 recommendations:

* 54 actions had been completed, 22 actions are ongoing and 10 actions are still in progress
* six recommendations had been completed, one recommendation is ongoing and three recommendations are still in progress.

Please refer to the full *2013–14 Fire Season Compliance Report – 2015 Progress Update* [15] for IGEM’s detailed findings on the implementation progress of the 86 actions and 10 recommendations.

IGEM will prepare a final progress update for government in the second half of 2016.

1 The three 2013–14 fire season reports are the Post Season Operations Review Fire Danger Period 2013–14 Report, the Goongerah-Deddick Trail Fire January– March 2014 Community Report and the Mt Ray-Boundary Track Fire January– March 2014 Community Report



# Risk and resilience

Risk and resilience are intrinsically linked. Risk is the effect of uncertainty on objectives2 and resilience has been broadly defined by the EMC as the capacity of systems and structures to survive, adapt and grow in the face of challenges.

*A Modern Emergency Management System for Victoria* (the Resilience Statement), released in October 2015, envisages a path forward for emergency management in Victoria [16]. It describes a modern emergency management system as one that involves communities, government, agencies and businesses working closely together to build safer and more resilient communities.

2 Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Standard Committee, AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009, Risk Management-Principles and Guidelines, November 2009

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### Performance and risk overview

##### Connecting with communities

In 2015, IGEM undertook the *Connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria* review [17]. The review examined current engagement programs of Victoria’s two volunteer based statutory bodies, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES).

It found that both agencies have a comprehensive suite of engagement initiatives, utilising various forms of information sharing. However, further development in evaluating and monitoring these activities will provide clearer direction towards continuous improvement.

##### Reducing bushfire risk

In November 2015, government released IGEM’s *Review of Performance Targets for Bushfire Fuel Management on Public Land* [18], which examined the appropriateness of a fixed hectare-based target for planned burning versus a risk reduction target.

The review found that a risk reduction target will better encourage shared responsibility for the management of bushfire risk, integrate planning and investment, and provide a more adaptable approach for fuel management.

The government accepted all four of IGEM’s recommendations to be implemented through *Safer Together, A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria*.

To reduce the likelihood of bushfire arson, Victoria Police developed the Operation Firesetter strategy, which is included in the *Bushfire Arson Prevention Policy Statement 2015–2018* [19]. This highly visible operation involves police patrols undertaking crime prevention and monitoring activities in high-risk bushfire arson locations during high risk periods. Mandatory activation



Source: Parks Victoria

of the operation occurs when fire danger rating forecasts are ‘extreme’ or ‘code red’ and discretionary activation of the operation can occur for an area when the fire danger rating is forecast to be high, very high or severe.

##### Preparing for heat and health emergencies

Heatwave and pandemic influenza are risks identified in

*Emergency Risks in Victoria Report 2014* [20].

In 2015, Victoria Police developed heatwave response plans and checklists at the regional and state levels. These plans and checklists ensure heatwave response is coordinated and integrated with other relevant agencies as part of a whole-of- government response.

Ambulance Victoria reviewed and updated the Heatwave Sub-plan in its all-hazards Emergency Response Plan. This was in response to the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office’s 2014 *Heatwave Management: Reducing the Risk to Public Health* report, which highlighted the significant community demand on ambulance services during periods of heatwaves [21].

The *Victorian action plan for pandemic influenza* [22], for government departments and agencies, was updated in August 2015. Business and non-government organisations are also encouraged to utilise it as it provides cross sector guidance on how to plan for and respond to pandemic influenza in Victoria.

##### Water and catchments

In reducing vulnerability to flood hazards, the *Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy* [23] builds on the government’s response to the *Review of the 2010–11 Flood Warnings and Response* [24]. Led by DELWP, in collaboration with relevant sector organisations, the new strategy focuses on increasing resilience through greater information sharing and working closer with communities.

Consultation on the strategy was re-opened between June and August 2015 to ensure contemporary input from a broad range of stakeholders and Victorian communities was considered before finalisation. The final strategy was released publicly in April 2016.

DELWP has also progressed work on an assurance plan for water and catchments during 2015–16. It is an example of proactive efforts to provide essential and concise information on emergency risks, roles and responsibilities with respect to aspects such as water quality, dam safety and floodplain management.

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### Progress against reform agenda

As part of the reform program, guided by the *Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper* [25] (the White Paper), the government is in the process of developing new emergency management planning arrangements. These new arrangements seek to minimise the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies on the community by adopting an integrated approach and promoting shared responsibility.

##### Critical infrastructure resilience

The White Paper emphasised the need for Victorian critical infrastructure arrangements to adopt an all hazards model that addresses all emergency risks, not just terrorism.

On 1 July 2015, Part 7A of the Act and the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy, as well as relevant Regulations and Ministerial Guidelines came into effect. Together, these instruments provide the new emergency risk management arrangements for critical infrastructure resilience in Victoria

(the arrangements).

Under the arrangements, critical infrastructure in Victoria is assessed as local, major, significant or vital using a criticality assessment methodology. Infrastructure that have been designated as vital, or assessed as major or significant are recorded and maintained in the Victorian Critical Infrastructure Register by EMV.

To enable continual resilience building of Victoria’s most critical infrastructure, owners and operators of designated vital infrastructure, with support from portfolio departments, must satisfy a range of mandatory requirements under the Act known as the Resilience Improvement Cycle.

IGEM is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the arrangements and will be preparing an implementation progress report in the second half of 2016. This will focus on assessing the implementation of the Resilience Improvement Cycle.

### Future directions

##### Community Resilience Unit

In May 2015, the government established the Social Cohesion and Community Resilience Taskforce to adopt a whole-of- government and whole-of-community approach to address social cohesion, community resilience and to prevent violent extremism. This Taskforce is supported by the Community Resilience Unit, which is led by the Chief Resilience Officer for Victoria.

The government released the *Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria’s Social Cohesion and the Resilience of its Communities* in December 2015 [26]. This was developed with the involvement of a broad range of community and not-for- profit organisations, government agencies, local government, community members, Australian and international academics and philanthropic foundations.

In the face of increasing global uncertainty and conflicts, this framework seeks to reduce the likelihood and impact of racial, ethnic and religious motivated violence occurring in Victoria. The framework outlines how governments, communities, academics and other stakeholders can work together to:

* protect and enhance the social cohesion and resilience of our communities and society as a whole
* develop initiatives that help to prevent a small group of individuals, or networks of individuals, harming our cohesive society through violent extremism.

Similar to the Resilience Statement, this framework acknowledges that government cannot address social cohesion challenges by itself and will need the strong collaboration of communities to make this a reality.

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##### Resilient Melbourne

Melbourne is participating in the 100 Resilient Cities challenge3.

The Resilient Melbourne strategy was launched in May 2016. The strategy development involved Melbourne's 32 local councils, Victorian Government departments, agencies, academics, industries and community groups working together. The strategy looks to address the chronic stresses and acute shocks that Melbourne is likely to experience. It focuses on the following four long-term objectives, delivered through four action areas.

The long-term objectives are:

* stronger together – empower communities to take active responsibility for their own and each other's wellbeing, safety and health
* our shared places – create and sustain buildings, infrastructure and activities that promote social cohesion, equality of opportunity and health
* dynamic economy – provide diverse local employment opportunities that support an adaptable workforce that is ready for the jobs of the future
* a healthier environment – enable strong natural assets and eco-systems alongside a growing population.

The four action areas are:

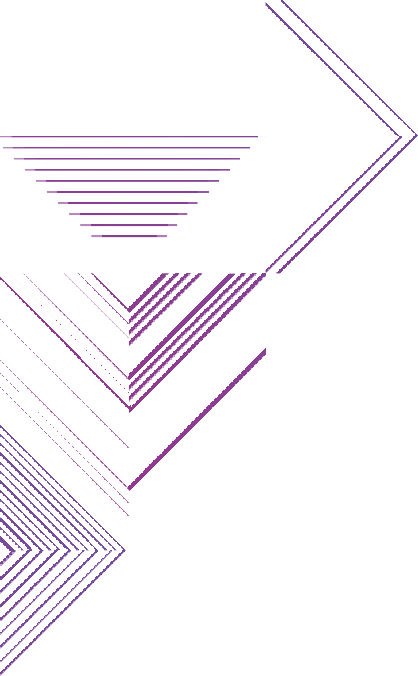
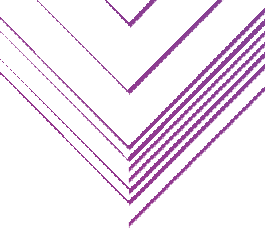
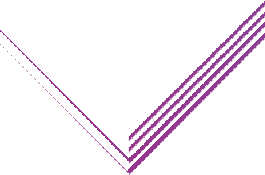
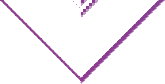
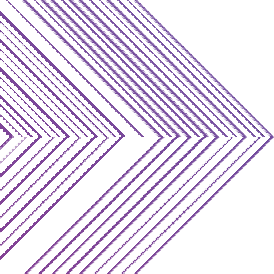
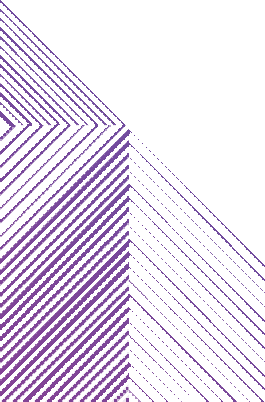
* Adapt – reduce our exposure to future shocks and stresses
* Survive – withstand disruptions and bounce back better than before
* Thrive – significantly improve people's quality of life
* Embed – build resilience thinking into our institutions and ways of working.

Resilient Melbourne is partnering across sectors, jurisdictions and with local, State and Federal government agencies to implement the strategy's actions.

##### Improving community resilience

VICSES released its draft community resilience strategy in 2015. The strategy is closely aligned with EMV’s work on a modern emergency management system, leverages off IGEM’s *Connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria* review [17] and is based on research commissioned by VICSES. Work is continuing to finalise the strategy following consultation with communities and stakeholders.

3 100 Resilient Cities is an initiative pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, which has been created to help cities around the world to prepare to meet the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century. Melbourne was selected from 372 applicant cities around the world to be among the first wave of 32 cities to join the network.



# Capability and response

The White Paper articulated a vision of a sustainable and efficient emergency management system. The sector has embraced this vision and embarked on this journey through major legislative reform in the past three years, which is continuing.

In order to improve and innovate the way the sector works together to respond to emergencies, sharing of good practice and identifying and learning lessons after emergencies are crucial. The sector is committed to continuous improvement, which has resulted in a range of assurance activities occurring across all levels of the sector in 2015 and early 2016 with an aim to improving emergency response.



Source: Lawrence Pinder

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### Performance and risk overview

##### Building sector preparedness

IGEM’s *Review of Victoria’s emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies*[27] found that a shared understanding of sector preparedness in Victoria is vital. The review examined selected national and international preparedness models and presented an example model for reporting and assessing sector preparedness in Victoria.

In its recommendation, the review identified the *Victorian Emergency Management Capability Blueprint 2015–2025* [28] (the Blueprint) as the primary mechanism to progress the sector to an all-hazards emergency management capability model. The Blueprint seeks to establish a baseline of the State’s current capability and capacity, and identify gaps and reinvestment options. The next milestone for the Blueprint is to develop a capability framework to determine and understand the sector’s current capability and capacity.

##### Strengthening incident management

IGEM’s *Review of the initial response to the 2015 Wye River – Jamieson Track fire* [7], released in February 2016, was a critical review undertaken at the request of the Minister. The fire destroyed 98 houses in Wye River and 18 houses in Separation Creek on Christmas Day 2015.

The objective of the review was to report on the learnings from the Wye River – Jamieson Track fire of December 2015 with a focus on documenting good practice and fostering continuous improvement.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the review, IGEM made five observations in relation to the initial attack, incident documentation, control strategies, public information and community engagement, and evacuation and traffic management. IGEM also made five additional observations in the addendum of the report based on direct in-field monitoring activities it conducted.

Overall, IGEM determined that there were opportunities for improvement which resulted in the following four recommendations to:

* improve the ability of decision-makers to accurately ascertain the level and allocation of resources deployed at any given time
* ensure documentation systems and information recording processes capture all operational activities and maintain the accuracy and relevance of all developed products
* encourage earlier classification of complex fires as Level 3 incidents
* extract learnings and share leading practice by developing case studies, which are shared with and within agencies at all levels.

Government and the EMC, in collaboration with the chief officers of the fire responder agencies, accepted all four recommendations from the IGEM's *Review of the Initial Response to the 2015 Wye River-Jamieson Track Fire* [7]. They welcomed IGEM’s report as supporting their commitment to continuous learning and improvement in the sector.

With the completion of IGEM’s review, the Coroners Court4 is also conducting its own investigation into the Wye River – Jamieson Track Fire.

4 Under the *Coroners Act 2008*, Coroners can investigate certain fires, even when the fire did not result in the death of a person, as was the case with the Wye River – Jamieson Track Fire.

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##### Preparing for challenges ahead

David O’Byrne’s independent *Report of the Victorian Fire Services Review* [8] was released by government in early 2016. The review focused on how the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board can reach their potential and continue to deliver essential services to the community in the face of new challenges around population growth, demographic changes, climate change, urbanisation and globalisation.

The review made 20 recommendations, 18 of which were accepted by the government. Workplace culture, governance and interoperability were identified as three areas for improvement. In its response, the government outlined how the fire services, EMV, DELWP and various sector governance committees will address the recommendations accepted by government.

##### Supporting local governments

At the municipal level, Local Government Victoria (LGV) commissioned an evaluation of the Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program (MERP). MERP funding supports and improves councils’ capability to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events. The *Evaluation Report: Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program* was released in October 2015 [29].

The report found that MERP meets the needs of councils and is well-structured. Nonetheless, council staff and stakeholders involved in the evaluation identified three areas for improvement, which included:

* extending the funding duration to reduce issues of staff turnover and challenges in recruitment
* improving guidance around the funding, including providing greater clarity around the objectives of the program, its strategic intent and the intended outcomes
* encouraging or supporting collaboration among councils, which has the potential to reduce duplication and enhance knowledge and skill-sharing among councils.

Based on the findings, the report made four recommendations, two of which related to continued funding and better allocation of funding among councils. The other two recommendations seek to ensure the MERP has clearly defined objectives and intended outcomes and for LGV to continue improving its communication with councils.

##### Emergency calltaking and dispatch

IGEM has a legislative responsibility to monitor and investigate non-financial performance of the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA). ESTA provides a critical link between the community and Victoria’s emergency service organisations via the Triple Zero (000) service. From January 2015 to April 2016, IGEM conducted 67 screenings5, completed one investigation and is in the process of finalising another investigation.

##### Continuous improvement

The sector’s commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in the development of the *Emergency Management Operational Review 2014–15* [5, 6], which was prepared by EMV in collaboration with the sector. This report was released in two parts:

* Part 1 provides a general overview of the weather and operational activity across 2014–15, as well as a series of case studies designed to identify and share identified lessons
* Part 2 provides insights and suggested treatments based on themes identified across 2014–15 to inform continuous improvement.

The State Review Team6 consulted with subject matter experts to develop an action plan for implementing the suggested treatments.

This action plan, along with insights identified in the report are part of a two-year rolling cycle of learning and improvement. The State Review Team, with support from IGEM, will monitor the progress of the action plan.

5 Prior to commencing an investigation into an ESTA matter, IGEM will conduct a screening process to examine the issues of the particular matter and depending on the level of risk, may proceed to a formal investigation.

6 The State Review Team provides strategic direction and state level management of debriefing, monitoring and review activities in the sector.

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* 1. Progress against reform agenda

##### Performance standards

In November 2015, EMV released the *Emergency Management Performance Standards* [30] (the standards), which were developed in collaboration with responder agencies. Consistent with the intent of the White Paper, the establishment of system-wide standards will support an increasingly networked system-wide capability and capacity.

The standards provide responder agencies with shared objectives and minimum requirements for undertaking emergency management functions. They also clarify how responder agencies contribute to the shared vision of “safer and more resilient communities”.

EMV has committed to reviewing the standards annually, and over time will expand the standards beyond responder agencies, including developing standards for the areas of risk and resilience and relief and recovery.

##### Response and control arrangements

The *Emergency Management (Control of Response Activities and Other Matters) Act 2015* passed through the Victorian Parliament in September 2015. It contributes to and supports an intent of the White Paper, which is to establish clear and effective response and control arrangements.

### Future directions

##### Training and exercising

Progressive and coordinated training and exercising is a crucial component of building and maintaining the required capability and capacity for emergency management in Victoria. EMV, working together with sector organisations, will lead the refinement of relevant state-wide training and exercising frameworks. IGEM also has responsibility to evaluate state- wide training and exercising arrangements under the Act.

##### Supporting emergency management volunteers

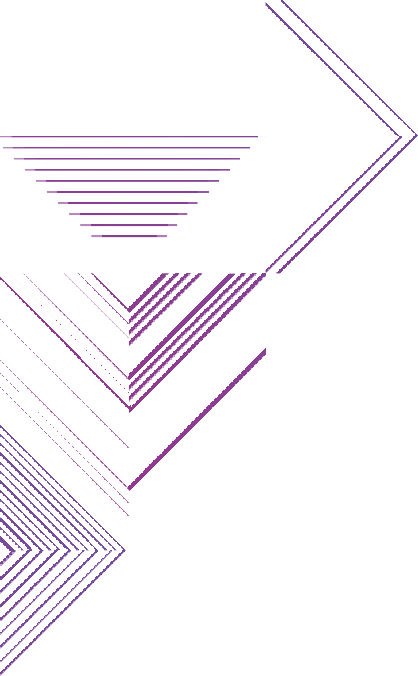
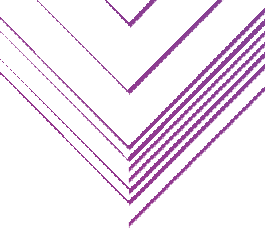
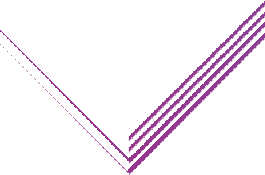
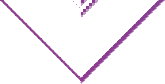
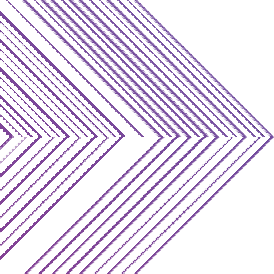
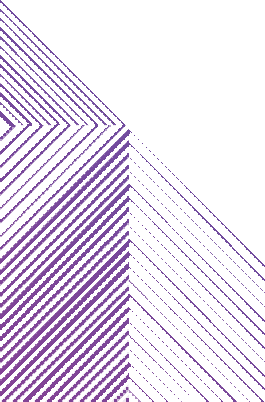
Volunteers are the backbone of emergency management organisations in Victoria. In response to increasing pressures from population growth and changing demographics, the Volunteer Consultative Forum released its *Strategic Priorities for Emergency Management Volunteering in Victoria* [9] (the Strategic Priorities) in October 2015. The Strategic Priorities complement the SAP by guiding strategy, investment planning and decision-making across the sector in relation to volunteer needs.

CFA has also released its *Volunteerism Strategy 2015–2020* [31]. The strategy aims to ensure the future capability of community- based volunteer emergency services and recognises the value that volunteers bring to Victorian communities by:

* encouraging, maintaining and strengthening the capacity of volunteers
* addressing the challenges of and embracing opportunities for societal, environmental and technical changes
* better understanding and promoting the social and economic value of volunteerism.



Source: Alex Coppel



# Relief and recovery

Relief refers to the provision of essential needs to individuals and communities during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency event.

Recovery generally refers to the process undertaken by communities to adapt to the new social and physical environment as a result of an emergency event. It is generally a longer term process for individuals and communities.

Both relief and recovery begin when an emergency occurs. Often response, relief and recovery activities are undertaken concurrently.

All individuals and communities are different, which means each recovery process should be tailored to best meet the needs of the affected community.



Source: Colac Otway Shire Council

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### Performance and risk overview

##### Community recovery

During 2015, IGEM undertook the *Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires* [32] (the Recovery Review). The Recovery Review sought to identify opportunities to improve strategies for engaging with communities and supporting community recovery following a major emergency.

The Recovery Review examined case studies in the municipalities of East Gippsland Shire and Hume City to assess:

* pre-emergency recovery planning and post-emergency recovery planning
* implementation and ongoing management of recovery strategies
* the effectiveness of and community satisfaction with recovery strategies implemented following the 2013–14 fires.

In relation to pre-emergency recovery planning, the Recovery Review found that awareness of recovery information was low for residents outside of traditional local networks. As a result, those who are outside these networks, including culturally and linguistically diverse community members, are far less likely to be involved in emergency management activities and receive information or help following an emergency event.

The Recovery Review also found that early consideration of characteristics of different groups within communities, and working with these groups to determine their recovery needs, is critical in ensuring recovery programs are coordinated and empower community action.

The Recovery Review identified a range of leading practice models and made five recommendations for the purposes of continuous improvement.

##### Recovery coordination

A Real Time Evaluation team7 examined the effectiveness of recovery coordination for Wye River and Separation Creek fire between December 2015 and March 2016. The evaluation found that recovery coordination was generally effective. Areas for improvements included:

* ensuring all agencies understand their roles and responsibilities under the new recovery arrangements
* better integration of response and recovery operations
* a need to build capacity and capability at the local level to enable rapid scaling-up of recovery efforts.

The Real Time Evaluation team presented treatment options for each of its 16 findings.

### Progress against reform agenda

##### Relief and recovery arrangements

In line with the intent of the reform program, the responsibility for state level relief and recovery arrangements were officially transitioned from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to the EMC on 1 September 2015.

Management arrangements at state level are the responsibility of EMV’s Director of Relief and Recovery, while relief and recovery coordination arrangements at the regional and local levels continue to be the responsibility of DHHS and municipal councils respectively.

The State Relief and Recovery Plan (part four of the Emergency Management Manual Victoria) was updated during 2015 to clarify relief and recovery coordination responsibilities at the state and regional tiers. It also introduced the role of the DHHS Relief and Recovery Coordination Senior Liaison Officer as an interface between regional and state tiers of relief and recovery coordination.

### Future directions

##### Enhancing impact assessment

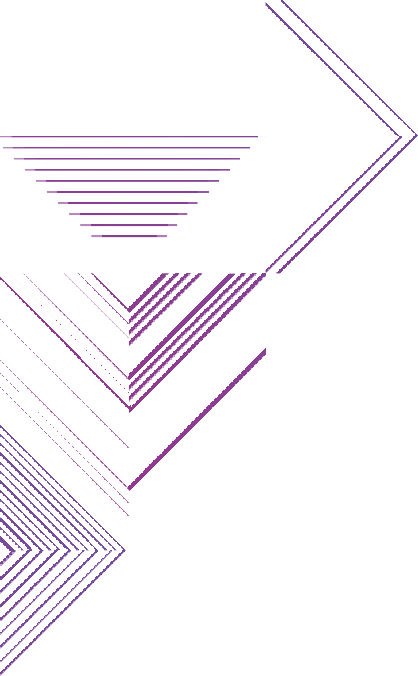
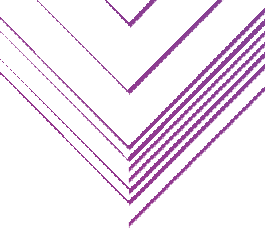
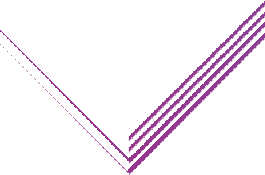
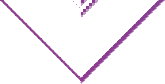
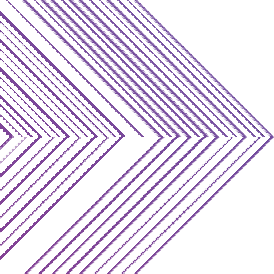
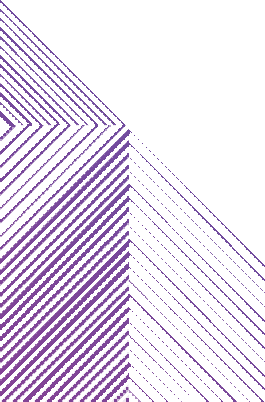
Consistent with the White Paper, the SAP includes an action to develop and implement a comprehensive impact assessment model across all hazards and all phases of emergency management, which takes into consideration the National Impact Assessment Model.

Initial and secondary assessment of impacts resulting from emergency events is a complex process, and relies on collating, comparing and analysing data from multiple agencies and government departments at the local, regional and state levels.

The model will include the development of a process, data platform and system to authorise, collect, analyse and communicate impact data, to better inform relief and recovery planning and activities.

Another intended benefit of this model is that readily available impact data will inform and improve response processes, community preparedness planning and resilience-based approaches to community development and emergency management.

7 The Real Time Evaluation Team comprised staff from Australian Red Cross, EMV and DHHS.



# Concluding remarks

Reform of emergency management in Victoria is well underway. IGEM commends the significant progress that the sector has made in relation to the implementation of a range of actions

to deliver on the intent of the White Paper.

To support effective implementation of these reforms and to foster sustainable improvement of the Victorian emergency management system, the sector undertook a broad range of assurance activities including detailed analyses of given emergency management incidents and themes.

While it is not possible to capture all activities in this summary report, the ongoing contribution and commitment of all sector organisations to assurance underpins the management of risks and improved delivery of mitigation, response and recovery outcomes in partnership with and for communities.

Led by IGEM and EMV, system level assurance activities are vital in informing assessment of integrated sector capacity, capability and performance. They drive future decision making, investment and a sustainable and efficient emergency management system.

IGEM will continue to report on sector performance, risks and progress against the sector reform program in the next Annual Assurance Summary in 2017.

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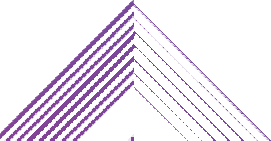
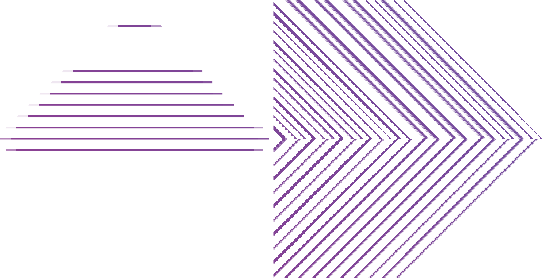
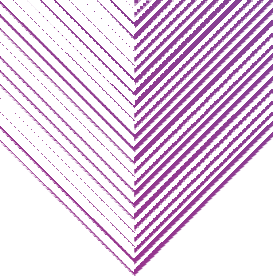
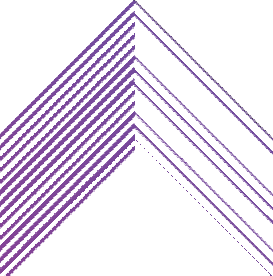
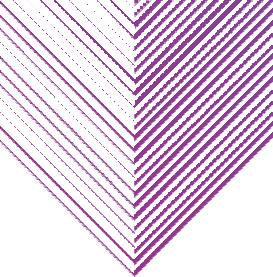
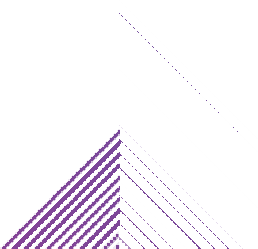
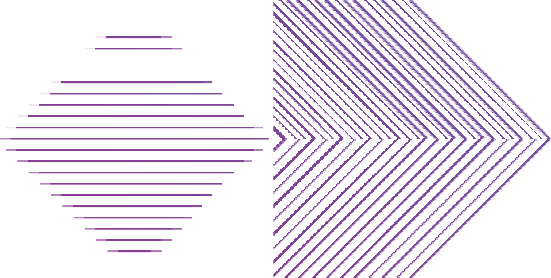
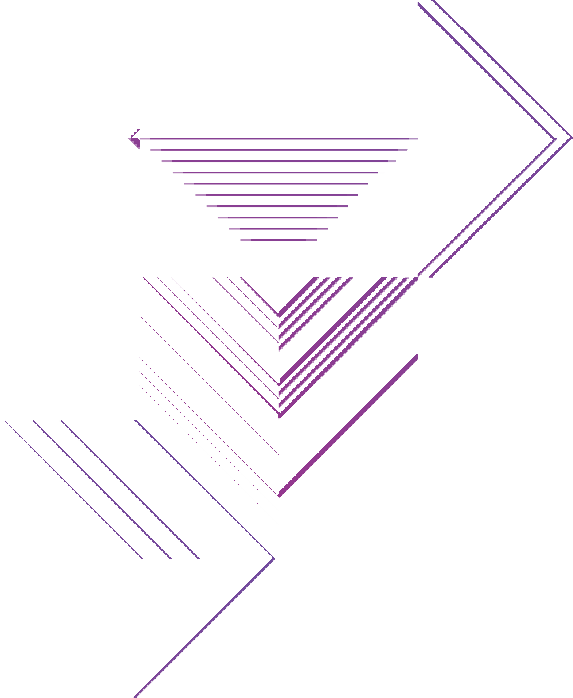
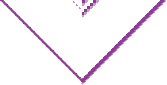
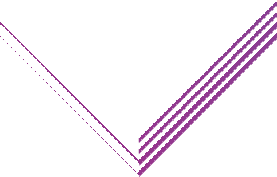
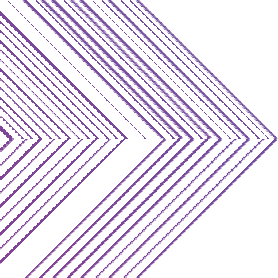
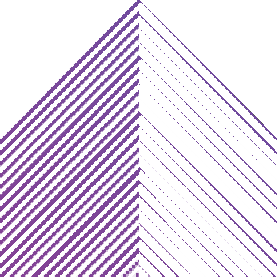
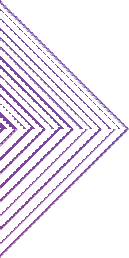
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