



IGEM
Inspector-General
for Emergency
Management

Implementation of recommendations from IGEM system-wide reviews

Progress Report

2018

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Progress Report

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Preface

This is the Inspector-General for Emergency Management's (IGEM) first report providing assurance to community and government on the implementation of recommendations from three system-wide reviews of emergency management arrangements in Victoria.

IGEM is legislatively required to produce an Annual Forward Plan of Reviews to inform its system-wide reviews. When developing its first plan in 2015, IGEM was informed by findings from other reviews and inquiries and consultation with Victorian emergency management sector organisations.

The issues that were brought to IGEM's attention included a perceived lack of suitable and useful information being conveyed to communities during major emergencies and the emphasis on emergency management being a shared responsibility. Also identified was a need to review the extent to which the sector is prepared for major emergencies, especially those occurring for long durations, simultaneously, or in short succession.

Furthermore, given the significant impact the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires had on many communities, IGEM deemed it valuable to understand the level of engagement with selected affected communities and their satisfaction with recovery strategies to inform future recovery models and approaches.

As a result, IGEM conducted the following reviews, which all included recommendations for improvement:

- *Connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria*
- *Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies*
- *Community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires.*

As an assurance body, IGEM considers it important to monitor the implementation of recommendations from its reviews. This ensures that these recommendations are addressed and closes the assurance loop so that there is less chance of future performance issues.

Since these three reviews were published, IGEM has observed that the emergency management sector has made a great deal of progress in relation to community preparedness, sector preparedness, and community recovery. This includes the vast amount of work that has been progressed through a number of key initiatives such as the *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*, the *Victorian Preparedness Framework*, and the *Resilient Recovery Strategy*.

IGEM is satisfied that the work detailed in this report addresses most of the recommendations from the reviews. However, IGEM acknowledges that the areas of community preparedness, sector preparedness, and community recovery are inherently broad and despite best efforts to improve arrangements, will continue to face challenges.

As part of its assurance activities, IGEM will continue to monitor developments by the sector in relation to these arrangements, particularly around the sector's progress in identifying improvements to these areas and applying these learnings to contribute to continuous improvement of emergency management in Victoria.

IGEM commends the leadership that EMV has demonstrated in driving key improvement initiatives and is grateful for their assistance in the development of this report.

IGEM will continue to monitor the implementation of all accepted recommendations from published system-wide reviews conducted under its Annual Forward Plan of Reviews. IGEM looks forward to continue working collaboratively with the emergency management sector to provide assurance of Victoria's emergency management arrangements.

Tony Pearce

Inspector-General for Emergency Management

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Acronyms

CBEM	Community Based Emergency Management
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
EM-COP	Emergency Management Common Operating Picture
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
IGEM	Inspector-General for Emergency Management
LGV	Local Government Victoria
MEMEG	Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MUDRI	Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
VAGO	Victorian Auditor-General's Office
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service
VMIA	Victorian Managed Insurance Authority

Executive summary

This is the first report by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) on the Victorian Government's implementation of recommendations from system-wide reviews conducted under IGEM's Annual Forward Plan of Reviews.

This report outlines the implementation progress of recommendations from three system-wide reviews conducted under IGEM's *Annual Forward Plan of Reviews 2015*:

- *Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria*
- *Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies*
- *Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires.*

Under section 64(1)(ba) of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act), IGEM is legislated to monitor and report to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on the implementation of the recommendations from its system-wide reviews.

This report outlines implementation progress since the public release of the system-wide reviews up until August 2018, while acknowledging actions undertaken prior to release that demonstrate progress towards the recommendations.

IGEM will continue to monitor and report on the implementation of accepted recommendations from published system-wide reviews, consistent with its legislated objectives to provide assurance and foster continuous improvement of Victoria's emergency management arrangements.

Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria

The objective of the *Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria* (Community Preparedness Review) was to identify opportunities to improve connections with Victorian communities in support of their enhanced preparedness for, and resilience to withstand and recover from, the consequences and effects of major emergencies.

IGEM made three recommendations directed to Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), which the Victorian Government accepted in full.

The recommendations proposed improvements to the way the emergency management sector used community engagement to support preparedness and measured the effectiveness of preparedness activities. IGEM considers two recommendations are complete and one is ongoing (refer to Table 1 on page 9).

Since the release of the Community Preparedness Review, EMV has continued to lead the emergency management sector to make good progress in enhancing community engagement, through key initiatives such as the *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*, the Community Based Emergency Management (CBEM) approach and the *EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework*.

EMV has developed tools and resources to support emergency management organisations to set targets and develop their own approaches to measuring the effectiveness of preparedness activities, and to encourage better practice community education and engagement in line with Victorian and national benchmarks.

However, IGEM considers that the key initiatives driving improvement in community engagement are yet to fully utilise monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review processes.

Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies

The objective of the *Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies* (Sector Preparedness Review) identified opportunities to enhance Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies.

The Sector Preparedness Review made one recommendation directed to EMV, which the Victorian Government accepted in full. IGEM considers that the recommendation is complete (refer to Table 1 page 9).

EMV has developed a preparedness model with three key elements:

- *Victorian Emergency Management Capability Blueprint 2015–2025* – outlines the current and desired future state of Victoria's emergency management capability.
- *Victorian Preparedness Goal* – builds on the capability blueprint and sets out the 21 core capabilities required to deal with risks and challenges faced by Victorian communities, and how to effectively deliver these core capabilities.
- *Victorian Preparedness Framework* – builds on the preparedness goal and sets out an outline of emergency management core capabilities and the critical tasks necessary to deliver them, as well as the steps involved in assessing capability and capacity in the emergency management sector.

In line with the recommendation, the preparedness model offers a definition of preparedness and addresses key preparedness elements such as governance, risk management, planning, capability and capacity assessment, training and development, exercising, evaluation and monitoring. The model emphasises the importance of building shared responsibility through enhanced connections with communities.

Since its initial release in May 2017, the framework has been adopted across the emergency management sector to inform capability thinking. EMV is continuing to develop the preparedness model in response to sector reforms and will adapt the model in line with new integrated emergency management planning arrangements under the Act.

Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires

The objective of the *Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires* (Community Recovery Review) was to identify opportunities to improve strategies for engaging with communities and supporting community recovery following a major emergency.

The Community Recovery Review made five recommendations directed to EMV and Local Government Victoria (LGV). Recommendations included developing a model to guide a coordinated approach to community recovery that empowers community action and reflects community needs. The recommendations also encouraged sharing better practices in emergency management and recovery and review of the arrangements for Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPCs) (refer to Table 1).

As there was no formal government response to the recommendations, and as requested by the then Minister for Emergency Services, IGEM worked with EMV to monitor how the intent of the recommendations was demonstrated in the broader relief and recovery reform program EMV coordinates.

IGEM considers that the program of work currently underway demonstrates engagement with the intent of the recommendations from the Community Recovery Review.

The Resilient Recovery Strategy is under development and aims to offer a model for planning community recovery, share expertise and enable communities to play a stronger role in pre and post-event recovery planning. The Victorian Impact Assessment Model and the Resilience Index also aim to strengthen the sector's approach to recovery.

The broader relief and recovery program has provided a number of opportunities for municipal councils and their staff to share expertise and experience. This includes the Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative (MUDRI), the Disaster Recovery Toolkit for Local Government, the Municipal Emergency Management Collaboration Evaluation Project, the Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group and the utilisation of Victoria's online emergency management lessons management system, EM-Share.

The role of MEMPCs was reviewed as part of recent legislative changes. As a result, MEMPCs will no longer report to municipal councils. For this reason, EMV advises that the committees are not the appropriate vehicle to deliver individual council outcomes, as envisaged in the Community Recovery Review.

Other elements of the broader relief and recovery program that support councils to consider community connection as part of their overall emergency preparedness include the Councils and Emergencies Project led by LGV.

Refer to Table 1 for a summary of implementation progress of the recommendations from the three system-wide reviews under IGEM's *Annual Forward Plan of Reviews 2015*.

Table 1: Summary of implementation progress

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS	FINDING
Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria		
<p>Recommendation 1 IGEM recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMV lead the sector in continuous improvement of community engagement programs using monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review processes. The sector should utilise the policy and guidance developed to support the reform including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the SAP Resilience Framework the Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management the Emergency Management Performance Standards, desired outcomes and performance measures in relation to risk and resilience. 	Ongoing	IGEM considers that this recommendation is progressing satisfactorily and will continue to monitor its implementation.
<p>Recommendation 2 IGEM recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As EMV leads the sector transition to the development and implementation of the Resilience Framework, consideration should be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporating explicit target setting in preparedness outcomes the development and implementation of measures that allow assessment of the effectiveness of preparedness activities during emergencies. 	Complete	IGEM considers that this recommendation has been implemented.
<p>Recommendation 3 IGEM recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the state transitions to a community resilience building agenda and increasingly fosters public participation in emergency management, the sector should consider the elements of better practice outlined in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office's Better Practice Guide: Public Participation in Government Decision-Making. 	Complete	IGEM considers that this recommendation has been implemented.
Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies		
<p>Recommendation 1 IGEM recommends that Emergency Management Victoria continue to lead the development and application of a comprehensive sector-wide preparedness model for integration within and across emergency management arrangements in Victoria.</p> <p>The model should clearly define preparedness within the context of sector and statewide activity, underpinned by a thorough understanding of risk, and embracing the principles of shared responsibility, through enhanced connections with Victorian communities.</p> <p>The model should specifically address, among other things, the key elements of governance, risk management, planning, capability and capacity assessment, training and development, exercising, evaluation and monitoring.</p>	Complete	IGEM considers that this recommendation has been implemented.

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS	FINDING
<i>Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires</i>		
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>IGEM recommends that Local Government Victoria and EMV provide opportunities for municipal councils to share expertise and better practices in building connections with communities, and strengthening communities' capacity to support individuals' recovery from emergency events.</p>	Not applicable ¹	IGEM considers the broader relief and recovery reform program, coordinated by EMV, demonstrates engagement with the intent of the recommendations from this review.
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>IGEM recommends that EMV reviews the arrangements for MEMPCs to ensure that municipal councils' strategies for building community connections for emergency preparedness and recovery, and for communicating with communities during recovery, are considered as part of municipal councils' overall emergency preparedness.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>IGEM recommends that LGV, in consultation with EMV, facilitate the exchange of better practices, and the liaison between senior municipal managers, in order to share expertise and strengthen municipal councils' organisational capacity to mount recovery operations.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>IGEM recommends that EMV, with recovery agencies and councils, develop a model for guiding and facilitating community recovery that draws on the State's experience, and ensures that community recovery programs are coordinated, empower community action, and reflect communities' characteristics and needs.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>IGEM recommends that EMV with municipal councils, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Regional Development Victoria, prepare guidance on successful community recovery project models, including the use of group facilitation, to assist municipal councils and community groups that are developing community recovery activities.</p>		

¹ IGEM has not assigned individual statuses to recommendations from this review. As requested by the then Minister for Emergency Services, IGEM monitored whether the intent of the recommendations had been met as part of the broader relief and recovery reform program.

1 Introduction

Established in 2014, the Inspector-General for Emergency Management's (IGEM) primary role is providing assurance to government and the community regarding emergency management arrangements in Victoria and fostering their continuous improvement.

As part of its role, IGEM undertakes system-wide reviews, including reviews of the emergency management functions of responder agencies and government departments as prescribed in section 64(1)(b) of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act).

These reviews are based on an Annual Forward Plan of Reviews developed by IGEM in consultation with the emergency management sector and provided to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services (the minister). The plan focuses on strategic, emergency management-related systemic issues of significance to all Victorians.

Based on its first Annual Forward Plan of Reviews published in 2015, IGEM conducted three system-wide reviews relating to community preparedness, sector preparedness and community recovery. These reviews were published in 2016 and 2017.

Under section 64(1)(ba) of the Act, IGEM is legislated to monitor and report to the minister on the implementation of recommendations arising from system-wide reviews. Implementation monitoring seeks to ensure that the lessons identified from emergencies, including recommendations and agreed actions, are implemented in a sustainable manner to make a lasting difference for Victorian communities.

This is IGEM's first report on the Victorian Government's implementation of recommendations from its system-wide reviews.

IGEM will continue to monitor and report on the implementation of accepted recommendations from published system-wide reviews, consistent with its legislated objectives to provide assurance and foster continuous improvement of Victoria's emergency management arrangements.

2 Background

IGEM conducted three system-wide reviews of the Victorian emergency management sector based on its *Annual Forward Plan of Reviews 2015*:

- *Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria*
- *Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies*
- *Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires.*

2.1 Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria

The objective of the *Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria* (Community Preparedness Review) was to identify opportunities to improve sector connections with Victorian communities in support of their enhanced preparedness for, and resilience to withstand and recover from, the consequences and effects of major emergencies.

This review examined activities undertaken by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) – two agencies that play a critical role in assisting Victorian communities to understand their emergency risk and what they need to do to prepare for emergency events.

The review's scope focused on householder preparedness, and examined CFA and VICSES programs that connect and prepare Victorians for major bushfires, floods and storms across hazard-prone locations in urban, rural and regional city areas.

IGEM made three recommendations directed to Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) which were consistent with priorities for reform identified in the *Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan* (SAP) (refer to Table 1 on page 9).

On 5 May 2017, the Victorian Government responded to IGEM's review, approving its publication, accepting each recommendation and outlining actions that were planned or underway to address the recommendations.²

2.2 Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies

The objective of the *Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies* (Sector Preparedness Review) was to identify opportunities to enhance Victoria's sector preparedness for major emergencies.

The review explored possible pathways for Victoria to strengthen preparedness for major emergencies that recognise and reflect the current emergency management arrangements.

² Refer to <https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Government-response-to%20IGEMs-Review-of-connecting-with-and-preparing-communities-for-major-emergencies-in-Victoria.pdf>

As Victoria's emergency management sector did not have standards or a baseline to measure sector preparedness, this review presented an example model of preparedness for emergency management activities, including reporting and assessing.

The review made one recommendation directed to EMV (refer to Table 1 on page 9).

On 5 May 2017, the Victorian Government responded to IGEM's review, approving its publication, and accepting the recommendation and outlining actions that were planned or underway to address the recommendation.³

2.3 Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires

The *Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires* (Community Recovery Review) identified opportunities to improve strategies for engaging with communities and supporting community recovery following a major emergency.

The review examined the 2013–14 recovery experiences of East Gippsland Shire Council and Hume City Council, and their communities.

The review made five recommendations directed to EMV and Local Government Victoria (LGV) (refer to Table 1 on page 9).

The review was publicly released on 26 February 2016, following approval by the minister.

Unlike the Community Preparedness Review and Sector Preparedness Review, the Victorian Government did not release a formal government response setting out whether recommendations were accepted and what activity was planned.

³ Refer to <https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Government-response-to-IGEMs-Review-of-Victorias-EM-sector-preparedness-for-major-emergencies.pdf>.

3 Approach

This report outlines implementation progress since the public release of the system-wide reviews up until August 2018, while acknowledging actions undertaken prior to release that demonstrate progress towards the recommendations.

IGEM assessed progress towards implementing the recommendations from the Community Preparedness Review and the Sector Preparedness Review by considering activities outlined in the government response to each review as well as information provided by EMV.

As there was no formal government response to the recommendations from the Community Recovery Review, the minister requested that IGEM work with EMV to monitor how the intent of the recommendations was demonstrated in the broader relief and recovery reform program. For this reason, IGEM took a different approach to monitoring this review.

Specifically, IGEM has provided a high-level overview of how relief and recovery reforms led by EMV address the themes from the review rather than an individual assessment of the status of each recommendation.

While the Community Recovery Review directed some recommendations to LGV, IGEM's monitoring focus is on the program of activity coordinated by EMV, in line with the scope of the minister's request.

3.1 Assurance principles

IGEM's assurance activities are guided by the Assurance Framework for Emergency Management (the framework), which provides the foundation for a coordinated and collaborative approach to sector-wide assurance.

The framework defines assurance as:

An expression or statement designed to increase the confidence of government and the community in the ability of the emergency management system to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

The framework articulates four principles to guide assurance activities performed in relation to the emergency management system in Victoria.

Refer to Table 2 on the following page for an overview of the four principles that IGEM applied in preparing this report.

Table 2: Assurance Framework for Emergency Management principles

PRINCIPLE	APPLICATION
Continuous improvement	The sector supports a culture of continuous improvement by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing results of assurance activities and information on contemporary, better practice in emergency management • focusing on systems of work – and not individuals – to ensure that assurance is non-adversarial • understanding that the sector requires time, resources, and the opportunity to identify and implement sustainable solutions.
Collaboration and coordination	The sector works together, and with Victorian communities, to ensure a coordinated approach to assurance to reduce unnecessary duplication by leveraging shared information and systems.
Adding value	Assurance is proportionate and considers risk-based approaches. The results provide evidence-based, meaningful, and timely information for the sector, government and the community about the performance of the sector and opportunity for improvement.
Reducing burden	Assurance activities should be conducted in the most efficient way possible, taking into account the need to not create unnecessary burden for organisations. Where possible, required information to support assurance activities should be acquired through existing organisational mechanisms and information already gathered through existing monitoring or review process.

3.2 Stakeholder engagement

IGEM commenced engagement with EMV in December 2017 to build its understanding of activity undertaken to address recommendations and explain the implementation monitoring process. Across this engagement, IGEM and EMV worked together to identify key sources of information to support monitoring.

On 13 July 2018 IGEM wrote to EMV to formally request an update on the progress of the recommendations from the three system-wide reviews.

IGEM is grateful for the constructive and transparent assistance provided by EMV, and its open and collaborative approach across the monitoring process.

3.3 Information collection and analysis

IGEM gathers information from a variety of sources to inform its understanding of implementation progress.

To avoid unnecessary duplication IGEM utilised information already gathered through its monitoring of the implementation of *Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan Update #2 2017–20 (SAP)*.

Where possible, IGEM reviewed publicly available information such as reports, research papers, ministerial statements and websites, in order to corroborate evidence provided and reduce EMV's reporting requirements.

IGEM then provided advice to EMV on additional information required to monitor implementation of the recommendations and invited EMV to provide progress updates outlining key developments relevant to the system-wide reviews and the recommendations.

All information collected for use in this report was stored securely and managed in accordance with IGEM's confidentiality requirements under the Act.

Recommendations from the Sector Preparedness Review and Community Preparedness Review have been assigned the implementation status of ongoing or complete.

Table 3 describes the status that IGEM assigns for each action.

Table 3: Implementation status

STATUS	DESCRIPTION
Complete	Recommendation has been completed satisfactorily.
Ongoing	Recommendation is still in progress and IGEM will continue to monitor and report on its status in future reports.



(Source: EMV)

4 Implementation progress

This chapter outlines the implementation progress of recommendations from the three system-wide reviews conducted under IGEM's *Annual Forward Plan of Reviews 2015*.

4.1 Review of connecting with and preparing communities for major emergencies in Victoria

Recommendation 1

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
<p>IGEM recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMV lead the sector in continuous improvement of community engagement programs using monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review processes.• The sector should utilise the policy and guidance developed to support the reform including<ul style="list-style-type: none">– the SAP Resilience Framework– the Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management– the Emergency Management Performance Standards, desired outcomes and performance measures in relation to risk and resilience.	Ongoing

The Community Preparedness Review found that community members with higher levels of engagement with emergency management organisations were more aware of the risks of emergencies and were more likely to have considered their response. In this way, emergency management community engagement programs could lead to increased levels of community preparedness.

However, the review found that although agencies had demonstrated a commitment to monitoring the outcomes of engagement programs, it was not clear how lessons emerging from this monitoring would be learnt or acted upon. To address this, the review asserted the importance of monitoring, evaluation, review and continuous improvement in future engagement initiatives.

The government supported this recommendation in full and committed to reforms that emphasised the importance of community engagement in emergency management.

The government response outlined a range of agency-level community engagement programs already supporting preparedness, and set out key high-level initiatives to address the recommendation including the:

- *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*⁴
- Community Based Emergency Management (CBEM) approach
- EM-LEARN Framework
- *Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards*.⁵

⁴ Refer to <https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Government-response-to%20IGEMs-Review-of-connecting-with-and-preparing-communities-for-major-emergencies-in-Victoria.pdf>

⁵ Refer to <http://files.em.vic.gov.au/EMV-web/EM-Performance%20Standards-V2.-December-2016.pdf>

IGEM considers that, since the release of the Community Preparedness Review, EMV has continued to lead the emergency management sector to make good progress in enhancing community engagement.

However, IGEM notes that the key initiatives driving improvement in community engagement are yet to fully utilise monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review processes.

Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management

Resilience in the emergency management context is defined as ‘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’.⁶

Resilience and preparedness are inherently linked – the more that emergency managers can support communities to be resilient, the stronger and more prepared Victoria will be for emergency events.⁷

EMV’s 2017 *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*⁸ (the Community Resilience Framework) aims to provide people and organisations operating within the Victorian emergency management sector with principles and community resilience characteristics to guide the sector’s strategies, programs and approaches – including those relating to engagement with the community.

The Community Resilience Framework aims to incorporate guiding principles for shared responsibility and self-reliance in prevention, planning, response, relief and recovery activities, communications and publications.

Figure 1: Community resilience characteristics



Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management (Source: EMV)

⁶ Refer to https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Community_Resilience%20_Framework.pdf, p. 12

⁷ Refer to https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Community_Resilience%20_Framework.pdf

⁸ Refer to https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Community_Resilience%20_Framework.pdf

'Democratic and engaged' is one of the seven characteristics underpinning the Community Resilience Framework. It aims to ensure everyone has opportunity to participate in decision-making and community activities. This is made up of elements such as citizen engagement, volunteerism and youth engagement.

Aligned to the recommendation, the Community Resilience Framework is being utilised by the sector to inform initiatives to improve community engagement. Examples include:

- The *VICSES Community Resilience Strategy 2016–2019*⁹, which draws on the framework and outlines how VICSES will work with communities to build resilience. It provides a three-year road map for the future design and development, and delivery and evaluation of programs and resources.
- The City of Casey's Community Resilience Emergency Management Plan 2017–21, which highlights community resilience as a shared responsibility and sets out how the council will work with communities to plan and manage emergencies.

Community Based Emergency Management (CBEM)

In May 2016 EMV released the *Overview of Community Based Emergency Management: Working together - before, during and after*. This resource is designed to be used by communities and organisations from within and outside the emergency management sector. This includes communities, emergency management agencies, government, business and industry, community service organisations and community based facilitators.¹⁰

CBEM provides communities and organisations with a collaborative planning and engagement approach, for people to better connect and work together before, during, and after emergencies.

As every community is different, the CBEM approach aims to build local understanding of the people, assets, values, priorities, likely emergency scenarios, what arrangements are already in place, and what can be done to support communities and organisations to work together and plan for emergencies.

The approach seeks to build community resilience and preparedness by providing:

- a consistent and recognised approach for communities to use by connecting local networks, with the support of emergency management agencies and local government
- opportunities for other partners such as other levels of government, business, industry and non-government organisations to become involved
- a process for working together that builds on local strengths, by using the combined local knowledge, expertise and resources of the community and supporting organisations
- key contacts and supporting information to build on experience and guide communities and organisations toward collaboratively working together at the local level
- locally tailored and facilitated processes that support the community to overcome challenges and develop opportunities, with appropriate types and levels of support
- connections with local leaders and networks to be used before, during and after emergencies
- opportunities for community-led initiatives to deliver community-based outcomes by working together to develop tailored processes, activities and usable products, rather than focussing on producing plans and outputs.

EMV's website provides examples of where CBEM approaches have informed community engagement including Morwell, Melbourne, Indigo Valley and Harrierville.

IGEM's 2017 *Annual Report – Implementation of recommendations on bushfire fuel management* found that the CBEM approach had also been tailored for use by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and CFA in 18 communities as part of bushfire risk management initiatives progressed.¹¹

To further develop the approach, in June 2018 EMV authorised the development of an online CBEM portal to provide an integrated, statewide system for any user to view and share community-based emergency planning information, together with plans which will be easy to find and use via an enhanced online interactive map. EMV advised that the CBEM portal will be developed and piloted with key communities and supporting organisations by May 2019, with an independent review of the approach to also be undertaken in June of the same year.

⁹ Refer to <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/documents/112015/128034/VICSES+-+Community+Resilience+Strategy+2016-2019-pdf+-print+friendly+version+-+2MB-/689981bc-4125-4ed7-9f35-c25b8743e451>

¹⁰ Refer to <https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Community-Based-Emergency-Management-Overview.pdf>

¹¹ Refer to <https://www.igem.vic.gov.au/reports-and-publications/igem-reports/annual-report-implementation-of-recommendations-on-bushfire>

EMV advised monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review processes for the CBEM approach are not yet specified as they will be driven by the community following the pilot of the portal and independent review, and may be shaped by legislative reform introduced through the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018*.

Assurance Framework for Emergency Management

Effective 17 October 2018, legislative amendments to the Act changed the name of the *Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management* to the Assurance Framework for Emergency Management.

The framework was released by IGEM in 2015 and is the overarching assurance framework for Victoria's emergency management sector.

The framework offers guidance relevant to improvement of community engagement in the emergency management sector, including:

- definitions and emergency management sector examples of monitoring, evaluation and review
- principles for sector assurance activities and continuous improvement.

IGEM recommended that the emergency management sector should utilise the framework to support continuous improvement of community engagement programs using monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review processes.

The government response indicated that the framework would be utilised primarily through two key EMV-led initiatives:

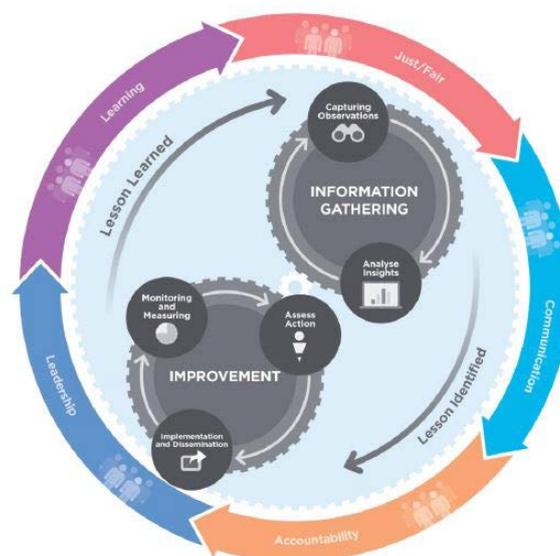
- EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework
- *Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards*.

EM-LEARN

The EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework was released for discussion, endorsed by the State Control Team, and noted by the Emergency Services Leadership Group in November 2015. IGEM considers that it demonstrates application of the Assurance Framework for Emergency Management and is evidence of a continuous improvement process in practice.

EM-LEARN applies to all agencies contributing to emergency management. It outlines a robust life cycle that provides the cultural characteristics required to support the lessons management process and platform. The process involves lessons being captured through assurance and learning activities, as well as analysis and implementation to enable the transition from lessons identified to lessons learnt.

Figure 2: EM-LEARN lessons management lifecycle



(Source: *EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework*, November 2015. EMV)

Since its launch, EM-LEARN has expanded to incorporate EM-Share – an online portal for the sector and community to share observations and insights, and support the identification of lessons and improvement actions.

EM-Share allows emergency management organisations to view, actively analyse, and track outcomes from their own data, and can allow the State Review Team¹² to effectively analyse and track statewide and multi-agency lessons, changes and improvements.

In use since October 2017, EM-Share provides the sector with the opportunity to drive continuous improvement in community engagement. The system invites observations, insights and lessons on the core capability of 'Building Community Resilience' and gathers information under the overarching theme 'Community Engagement and Connection'.

EM-Share has already captured a number of observations and insights from the sector relating to improving community engagement across emergency management planning and preparedness. Under the EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework, these insights and observations may give rise to lessons and improvement actions, which would be learned through application to future community engagement activity.

IGEM recognises that EM-Share is a rich source of information for lessons management and continuous improvement for community engagement. However, given the system is in its early stages of operations, this has not yet been applied to EMV's key community engagement improvement initiatives as outlined above.

Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards

The *Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards* provide responder agencies with objectives and minimum requirements for the emergency management functions they collectively undertake and clarify how these functions contribute to the shared vision of *safer and more resilient communities*.

The standards became effective on 1 January 2017, and reflect elements of the Assurance Framework for Emergency Management.

The standards offer agencies a mechanism to drive improvement in community engagement in the sector. As noted in the government response to the Community Preparedness Review, the 'Community Connection' standard includes a requirement for responder agencies to ensure strategies, policies, plans, practices and procedures involve appropriate community engagement and reinforce the culture of shared responsibility, supporting the objective that 'communities are appropriately engaged and more resilient, actively participating before, during and after emergencies'.¹³

However, it is not yet clear to what extent the standards have been utilised in driving improvement in community engagement, as the emergency management sector has yet to report on this particular standard.

IGEM recognises EMV has developed key community engagement initiatives such as the Community Resilience Framework and CBEM, however IGEM notes that these initiatives do not yet reflect the use of monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review processes, as set out in Recommendation 1.

Finding

IGEM considers that this recommendation is progressing satisfactorily and will continue to monitor its implementation.

¹² The State Review Team is a group of emergency management organisation representatives that provide strategic direction to and state level management of debriefing, monitoring and review activities in the Victorian emergency management sector.

¹³ Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards, Risk and Resilience element (Function: Community Connection).

Recommendation 2

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
<p>IGEM recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As EMV leads the sector transition to the development and implementation of the resilience framework, consideration should be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Incorporating explicit target setting in preparedness outcomes – The development and implementation of measures that allow assessment of the effectiveness of preparedness activities during emergencies. 	Complete

The Community Preparedness Review found there was little recent evidence on whether engagement programs had been effective in helping people during emergency events in Victoria. The review therefore highlighted the importance of establishing measures to assess the effectiveness of engagement programs in changing community behaviour during emergencies.

The review also highlighted the importance of setting and measuring progress against targets for preparedness and resilience. The review asserted that targets help set realistic expectations about what programs can achieve. Measuring performance against targets would provide assurance to government and the community on where preparedness had improved and focus attention on continuous improvement where targets were not met.

The review therefore encouraged EMV to consider developing targets and measures during the development and implementation of the Community Resilience Framework.

The government response supported the recommendation and drew attention to work underway to support measurement.

Key mechanisms that will enable the development and application of measures and targets for the Community Resilience Framework include:

- sample measures and indicators in the Community Resilience Framework
- minimum requirements in *Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards*
- baseline data and measurement developed through the Resilience Index, as part of EMV's Impact Assessment Program.

Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management

EMV advised that it considers that setting of targets should be done at a program or activity level, by emergency management organisations.

In line with this position, the Community Resilience Framework has not been developed to impose explicit targets or measures for preparedness outcomes. Instead, the Community Resilience Framework supports organisations to develop their own measurement approaches on how their activities contribute to the seven community resilience characteristics.¹⁴

The framework includes an 'Assessing Community Resilience User Guide' which provides example measures and indicators, designed to help guide organisations towards developing measures of their contribution to community resilience. The framework states that indicators may be considered more formally as part of the framework at a later stage, following a review of the initial application of the framework by agencies.

An early example of an agency developing its own approach to measuring effectiveness of preparedness activities is the *VICSES Community Resilience Strategy: Indicators and Evaluation Framework*, which includes measures designed to enable the agency to qualitatively evaluate its contribution to community resilience and preparedness. For example, one measure of community preparedness is the 'proportion of households that have an emergency plan.'

¹⁴ The seven community resilience characteristics in the *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management* include: Safe and well; Connected, inclusive and empowered; Dynamic and diverse local economy; Sustainable built and natural environment; Culturally rich and vibrant; Democratic and engaged; Reflective and aware.

Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards

The *Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards* also provide a basis for the establishment of targets and measures for the Community Resilience Framework. The Risk and Resilience, and Relief and Recovery standards set minimum requirements for a range of emergency management functions explicitly related to the Community Resilience Framework.

The standards define minimum requirements as ‘expectations, targets or standards of performance’. For example:

- Emergency management organisations align principles, priorities and governance arrangements to the Emergency Management Community Resilience Framework.
- Emergency management sector adopts an integrated and consistent system for community engagement in order to facilitate ‘two-way communications’ in accordance with the Emergency Management Community Resilience Framework, giving due consideration to the differences of communities.
- Emergency management sector adheres to the governance arrangements that support community connectivity as outlined within the Emergency Management Community Resilience Framework.

Although planned to commence in July 2017, reporting against the Risk and Resilience and Relief and Recovery Standards has yet to begin.

To measure the effectiveness of preparedness activities, emergency management organisations and communities need access to data to understand what difference the activities have made.

Resilience Index

EMV’s Resilience Index project involves collating community data, such as employment information and demographics, to provide a basis for evaluating the impact of emergencies and the effectiveness of programs. In developing the approach for this project, EMV considered the capacity of this data to assist in the identification of measures for the outcomes in the Community Resilience Framework.

Following development of a prototype in 2016–17, EMV aims to finalise production of the Resilience Index by January 2019.

IGEM considers that these three initiatives demonstrate EMV’s consideration of the development of targets and measures for the Community Resilience Framework.

IGEM notes that it is not yet clear to what extent the sector has adopted the measurement approaches and targets proposed in the Community Resilience Framework and *Victorian Emergency Management Performance Standards*.

Finding

IGEM considers that this recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 3

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
IGEM recommends that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the state transitions to a community resilience building agenda and increasingly fosters public participation in emergency management, the sector should consider the elements of better practice outlined in the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office’s Better Practice Guide: Public Participation in Government Decision-Making. 	Complete

The Community Preparedness Review highlighted the importance of better practice community education and engagement. This would allow a clearer direction for public participation in community education, awareness, and engagement programs, thereby encouraging clearer expectations between communities and the emergency management sector.

The review stated that the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) *Better Practice Guide on Public Participation in Government Decision-Making* could be used to assist in outlining the nature and extent of public participation in emergency management organisations' decision making.¹⁵

Better practice elements in the VAGO guide include:

1. clearly define the decision required, and the scope of the public participation exercise
2. understand who is affected and how they should be included
3. identify the resources, skills and time required for effective public participation
4. document the public participation and management approach
5. implement the public participation plan and monitor its progress
6. evaluate the public participation exercise and apply continuous improvement.

These key elements in the VAGO guide are reflected in two core resources developed by EMV to steer the community resilience building agenda:

- the Community Resilience Framework
- the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

Community Resilience Framework

IGEM considers that the Community Resilience Framework demonstrates alignment with some elements of the VAGO guide. Examples of this alignment are provided below.

- The framework highlights the need to understand and manage the expectations of communities on the scope of public participation. This includes identifying areas where communities can share more responsibility for creating resilience and where the state holds that responsibility (VAGO better practice element 1).
- Through acknowledging the challenges posed by the diversity of demographics across Victorian communities, the framework encourages emergency management organisations to understand who will be affected by emergencies. When considering how to include these community members, the framework promotes tailored approaches to community engagement that accommodate these differing needs (VAGO better practice element 2).
- The framework articulates the public participation approach to be taken by the sector in building community resilience (VAGO better practice element 5).

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

EMV developed a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Toolkit in September 2018 to assist its own project leaders in developing and implementing successful stakeholder engagement programs to support the delivery of their projects. The strategy is intended to cover all aspects of stakeholder engagement in EMV.

The toolkit contains:

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Guide** – to educate and provide guidance on how to develop and implement a stakeholder engagement and communications plan
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan** – an editable document for project leaders to populate as instructed by the guide
- **Stakeholder Engagement Worksheet** – a document for project leaders to use for identifying and managing stakeholders relevant to their project.

¹⁵ Refer to <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/20150130-Public-Participation-BPG.pdf>

IGEM considers that the strategy and toolkit demonstrate alignment with the VAGO guide. Examples of this alignment include:

- A six-step process to achieving good engagement which corresponds with the VAGO guide and includes guiding questions specific to engaging with stakeholders, such as questions relating to purpose and scope.
- Principles which underpin stakeholder engagement which also correspond to some of the elements of the VAGO guide. For example, principle 4 'we plan early' reflects the third element of public participation to identify the resources, skills and time required for effective public participation.

IGEM notes that elements of VAGO's *Better Practice Guide on Public Participation in Government Decision-Making* have been appropriately considered in the state's community resilience building agenda.

Finding

IGEM considers that this recommendation has been implemented.

4.2 Review of Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies

Recommendation 1

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
<p>IGEM recommends that Emergency Management Victoria continue to lead the development and application of a comprehensive sector-wide preparedness model for integration within and across emergency management arrangements in Victoria.</p> <p>The model should clearly define preparedness within the context of sector and statewide activity, underpinned by a thorough understanding of risk, and embracing the principles of shared responsibility, through enhanced connections with Victorian communities.</p> <p>The model should specifically address, among other things, the key elements of governance, risk management, planning, capability and capacity assessment, training and development, exercising, evaluation and monitoring.</p>	Complete

The Sector Preparedness Review identified opportunities to enhance Victoria's emergency management sector preparedness for major emergencies. IGEN recommended that EMV continue to lead the development of a sector-wide preparedness model, and outlined a number of key elements the model should address.

The government supported IGEN's recommendation in full, noting that EMV had completed the development of the preparedness model in 2016.

The model is based on the United States National Preparedness Goal, and has three components:

- *Victorian Emergency Management Capability Blueprint 2015–2025* – outlines the current and desired future state of Victoria's emergency management capability.¹⁶
- *Victorian Preparedness Goal* – builds on the capability blueprint and sets out the 21 core capabilities required to deal with risks and challenges faced by Victorian communities, and how to effectively deliver these core capabilities.¹⁷
- *Victorian Preparedness Framework* – builds on the preparedness goal and outlines emergency management core capabilities and the critical tasks necessary to deliver them, as well as the steps involved in assessing capability and capacity in the emergency management sector.¹⁸

¹⁶ Refer to <https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Emergency-Management-Victoria-Capability-Blueprint-2015-2025.pdf>

¹⁷ Refer to <https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/Victorian-Preparedness-Goal.pdf>

¹⁸ Refer to <https://files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/EMV-web/VictorianPreparednessFrameworkMay2018.pdf>

In May 2018 EMV released the *Victorian Preparedness Framework Update #1*.¹⁹ The update:

- reflects on the progress made so far, including case studies that illustrate how emergency management organisations have embraced the framework
- outlines the emergency management core capabilities and the critical tasks necessary to deliver them
- describes the steps involved in assessing capability and capacity in the emergency management sector
- provides a methodology to develop capability targets and how to use the targets to assess capability and capacity.

Key elements of the preparedness model

The following summarises how the model and its various components address each element of IGEM's recommendation.

- **Defining preparedness** – The model developed by EMV provides a definition of preparedness in the form of the *Victorian Preparedness Goal* – a safer and more resilient community that has the capabilities to withstand, plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies that pose the greatest risk.
- **Underpinned by thorough understanding of risk** – The Preparedness Framework uses the outcomes of the *Emergency Risks in Victoria: Report of the 2012–13 State Emergency Risk Assessment* to identify major risks and determine overall preparedness.²⁰ Based on the risks facing Victoria, the framework presents eight plausible scenarios on which capability and capacity assessments are to be based.²¹
- **Shared responsibility through enhanced connections with communities** – The model promotes shared responsibility in a number of ways:
 - The *Victorian Preparedness Framework Update #1* states that 'building safer and more resilient communities is the shared responsibility of all Victorians. We each have an obligation to contribute to improving preparedness, capability and resilience.'
 - The concept of shared responsibility through enhanced connections with communities is also reinforced by some critical tasks for the 'planning' and 'building community resilience' core capabilities in the model.
- **Key preparedness elements** – The preparedness model developed by EMV incorporates the seven interlinked elements in IGEM's recommendation – governance, risk management, planning, capability and capacity assessment, training and development, exercising, and evaluation and monitoring.
These elements are expressed at various levels of the model – in its five core capability elements, its 21 core capabilities, and the many critical tasks grouped underneath each core capability.

EMV's ongoing leadership in development and application of the preparedness model

EMV is continuing to lead application of the preparedness model, primarily through Action G4 of the SAP.²² This action commits to progress to an all-emergency capability model by June 2021, delivering an assessment of capability and capacity in the emergency management sector to prepare for future needs.

From 2018 to 2021, EMV and sector stakeholders will assess core capabilities across the emergency management sector, covering the preparedness model's five core capability elements – people, resources, governance, systems and processes.

EMV's Emergency Management Partnership Network also supports the application of the preparedness model by providing organisations in the business, industry and not-for-profit sectors with guidance to identify how they can best contribute to emergency management. Potential partner organisations are asked to align their skills and operating activities to the core capabilities. The framework has enabled targeted conversations about where potential partner organisations fit in the emergency management system.

¹⁹ Refer to www.emv.vic.gov.au/news/update-to-the-victorian-preparedness-framework

²⁰ Refer to https://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/justice/resources/ccae0110-ea30-4f89-85a2-2bfb4eb06bbf/repor_stateemergencyriskassessment2014emergencyrisksinvictoria.pdf

²¹ The scenarios are: bushfire/heatwave; earthquake/transport infrastructure; pandemic influenza; electricity supply disruption; flood/storm; plant disease; animal disease; hazmat emergency.

²² Refer to <http://files.em.vic.gov.au/EMV-web/SAP-updated-for-web.pdf>

EMV is continuing to develop the preparedness model in response to sector reforms. The *Victorian Preparedness Framework Update #1* noted the new integrated emergency management planning arrangements in the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (now Act) and the accompanying planning guidelines. Work on the framework's 'planning' core capability would be further developed or refined once the planning guidelines are further advanced.

Sector application of the preparedness model

Since its initial release in May 2017, the model has been adopted across the emergency management sector to inform capability thinking. Emergency management organisations have taken responsibility for embracing the framework and applying it to their own work.

Below are case studies included in the framework update which provide examples of how the model has been taken up across the sector.

- As part of its Councils and Emergencies Project, LGV has aligned the emergency management responsibilities and activities of councils to core capabilities from the *Victorian Preparedness Framework*.
- In its Victorian Emergency Services Capability and Capacity Roadmap 2018–2020, Australian Red Cross has aligned the goals and outcomes of its *Strategy 2020* to the relevant core capabilities of the *Victorian Preparedness Framework*.
- The *Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) Operational Capability Strategy 2017–2022* considers capability before, during and after emergencies, in line with the *Victorian Preparedness Framework*. The strategy also adopts the preparedness model's definitions of capability and capacity.
- CFA is developing a Capability Framework, with five core capabilities that align with the *Victorian Preparedness Framework* – Built and Natural Environment Modification, Community Behaviour Modification, Fire Suppression, Hazardous Condition Management, and Rescue.
- The 2016 Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) Exercise Framework recognises that it has a central role in developing and delivering many of the emergency management core capabilities that underpin the *Victorian Preparedness Goal*, and that exercising is a proactive way to build on these capabilities. The exercise framework sets out the DEDJTR's principles for exercising, including that its exercises may address the development of specific core capabilities as part of the *Victorian Preparedness Goal*.

IGEM recognises the extensive work EMV has led in the development and application of a comprehensive sector-wide emergency management preparedness model.

Finding

IGEM considers that this recommendation has been implemented.

4.3 Review of community recovery following the 2013–14 Victorian bushfires

The objective of the Community Recovery Review was to identify opportunities to improve strategies for engaging with communities and supporting community recovery following a major emergency. The municipalities of East Gippsland Shire and Hume City were selected as case studies for the review, based on the impacts of the 2013–14 fire season. The review made the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1

IGEM recommends that Local Government Victoria and EMV provide opportunities for municipal councils to share expertise and better practices in building connections with communities, and strengthening communities' capacity to support individuals' recovery from emergency events.

Recommendation 2

IGEM recommends that EMV reviews the arrangements for MEMPCs to ensure that municipal councils' strategies for building community connections for emergency preparedness and recovery, and for communicating with communities during recovery, are considered as part of municipal councils' overall emergency preparedness.

Recommendation 3

IGEM recommends that LGV, in consultation with EMV, facilitate the exchange of better practices, and the liaison between senior municipal managers, in order to share expertise and strengthen municipal councils' organisational capacity to mount recovery operations.

Recommendation 4

IGEM recommends that EMV, with recovery agencies and councils, develop a model for guiding and facilitating community recovery that draws on the State's experience, and ensures that community recovery programs are coordinated, empower community action, and reflect communities' characteristics and needs.

Recommendation 5

IGEM recommends that EMV with municipal councils, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Regional Development Victoria, prepare guidance on successful community recovery project models, including the use of group facilitation, to assist municipal councils and community groups that are developing community recovery activities.

As there was no formal government response to the recommendations from the Community Recovery Review, the minister requested that IGEM work with EMV to monitor how the intent of the recommendations was demonstrated in the broader relief and recovery reform program. For this reason, IGEM took a different approach to monitoring the recommendations from the Community Recovery Review.

Specifically, IGEM has provided a high-level overview of how relief and recovery reforms led by EMV address the themes from the review rather than an individual assessment of the status of each recommendation. While the Community Recovery Review directed some recommendations to LGV, IGEM's monitoring focus is on the program of activity coordinated by EMV, in line with the scope of the minister's request.

A model for guiding community recovery

The review found that emergency recovery placed significant strain on municipal councils, and that those with effective integrated recovery capability offered valuable learnings for others seeking to improve their management of recovery activities after an emergency event.

The review asserted that stronger guidance and facilitation of recovery event planning has a number of benefits such as:

- drawing on the state's recovery experience
- reflecting the characteristics and needs of communities
- combining the expertise of communities, municipal councils and state recovery emergency management organisations.

The Resilient Recovery Strategy is under development and demonstrates progress towards recovery reform by the emergency management sector to date.



Community engagement session (Source: EMV)

The strategy aims to support the sector and its partners, including municipal councils, to collaboratively share expertise, good practice, and learnings. The focus of the strategy is to enable communities to play a stronger role in pre and post-event recovery planning, and to strengthen community capacity to inform and deliver resilience and recovery outcomes.

In February 2017 EMV released a discussion paper to support the development of the Resilient Recovery Strategy. This generated over 55 responses regarding a new model for relief and recovery arrangements. EMV advised that it then undertook extensive consultation with community members, departments, agencies, organisations, and local government through meetings and state and regional workshops to inform a draft strategy outline.

Following the consultation process, a draft strategy outline was developed in July 2018, with objectives to:

- set out a shared concept for recovery that works for individuals, communities, local governments and state government
- outline a coherent plan of action for state government to progress the strategy with partners
- start an ongoing conversation and continue to learn and improve how recovery is undertaken.

The draft strategy outline also detailed strategic actions to:

- enable communities to play a much greater role in their recovery – such as delivering consistent, expert community engagement so that everyone is heard
- support those who work in recovery to do a great job – such as investing in people to build their skills and knowledge
- bring recovery thinking into every stage of emergencies – such as establishing clear roles, responsibilities and capabilities for key partners in recovery.

The draft strategy outline was presented to the State Crisis and Resilience Council Relief and Recovery Subcommittee in August 2018 and to the SCRC in November 2018. The SCRC supported the draft strategy outline and agreed to the establishment of a time-bound Inter-departmental Committee to further build on the strategy and deliver a detailed implementation plan.

As part the 2018 South West Fires recovery, EMV advised that it had established a Long Term Recovery team to support the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) regional recovery coordination and activities, and provide guidance, strategic advice and support to the Regional Recovery Leadership Committee.²³ EMV advised that as this approach was effective for the 2015 Wye River – Jamieson Track fire, it worked with DHHS to formalise and replicate this model.

There are a number of ways in which the emergency management sector can ensure that community recovery programs reflect communities' characteristics and needs.

The Victorian Impact Assessment Model is a project being progressed under merged SAP Actions G6 and A5:

Implement a comprehensive impact assessment model across all hazards and all phases of emergency management, taking into consideration the National Impact Assessment Model. This model will include a process to collect, analyse and communicate impact information to better inform response processes, and relief and recovery planning and activities. (Action G6)

Use community profiling to strengthen understanding of local community diversity, values and needs. This informs the sector on optimum service and engagement models and wider opportunities with respective communities. (Action A5)

It includes the development of a Resilience Index for the collection of baseline community information which can be used to contextualise damage assessments after an emergency, and provide a basis for evaluating medium to long-term consequences, and outcomes of recovery initiatives. This can then be used to inform decision-making and recovery planning to ensure that community needs are incorporated.

Furthermore, the sector's current practice of embedding consequence management into operational practice, so that it considers relief and recovery, assists in limiting the impacts of emergencies on communities. IGEM is conducting a review of impact assessment and consequence management under its Annual Forward Plan of Reviews – 2018. The review is planned to conclude in December 2018.

Sharing expertise and better practices

The Community Recovery Review found that municipal councils' responsibilities for community consultation, planning and development require that they recognise the distinct characteristics of groups within their communities. Having a better understanding of different community groups allows better community connections for preparedness and recovery activities.

²³ The Regional Recovery Leadership Committee comprises representatives from impacted municipal councils, EMV, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Agriculture Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, and the Victorian Farmers Federation.

EMV's relief and recovery program has provided a number of opportunities for municipal councils and their staff to share expertise and experience. EMV has advised that it supports the adoption of best practice resilience building information sharing via collaborations with the Monash University Disaster Resilience Initiative (MUDRI) and the partnership with the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) and LGV.

In particular, MUDRI allows the sector to draw on and adopt lessons and strategies from the publicly available *Compendium of Victorian Community-based Resilience Building Case Studies*.²⁴ The compendium shares knowledge about community-strengthening activities for researchers, government agencies, and community members interested in increasing resilience at a local level.

The *Disaster Recovery Toolkit for Local Government* (the toolkit) is another way in which municipal councils and the community can engage in best practice.²⁵ Developed as a result of a collaborative project with the ten municipal councils most affected by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, the toolkit provides a range of tools, resources and literature to help local government and communities prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. The toolkit consists of eight booklets, and focuses on understanding disaster recovery, recovery readiness, response, beyond the disaster, and engaging the community in recovery efforts.

The Municipal Emergency Management Collaboration Evaluation Project was a research project between EMV, LGV and VMIA to evaluate municipal emergency management collaboration models across the state. Amongst other findings, the *Municipal Emergency Management Collaborations Learnings Report (Final Report July 2017)* found:

- the majority of collaborative models adopt good governance and practices, operating across a range of organisational structures and sizes
- the Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group (MEMEG)²⁶ would benefit from the government adopting a more consistent and coordinated engagement approach to improve engagement outcomes.²⁷

IGEM notes that the evaluation did not focus specifically on recovery, rather on collaboration as a whole within the emergency management sector.

IGEM also notes that as a state-level committee of local government and other emergency management organisations that meets quarterly, MEMEG also provides an avenue for the sector to share expertise and best practice as its roles include:

- promoting good practice in municipal emergency management
- encouraging and enhance sharing of emergency management knowledge and skills.²⁸

MEMEG also conducts an annual lessons learned and knowledge sharing forum which may include relief and recovery content.

Meetings of Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPCs) and Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees (REMPCs), which meet several times a year, are also another avenue where council representatives can meet to share experiences and best practice.

Furthermore, EM-Share – Victoria's online emergency management lessons management system – is a central repository for observations, insights and lessons developed and shared on activities before, during and after an emergency as noted under Recommendation 1 of the Community Preparedness Review.

²⁴ https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1347128/Compendium-Sep-2018.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/disaster-recovery-toolkit-for-local-government>

²⁶ Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group (MEMEG) is a state-level committee of local government and other emergency management organisations. MEMEG supports and advises local government emergency management practitioners, builds capability and advocates on behalf of the local government sector on emergency management matters.

²⁷ Refer to https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/82541/Municipal-Emergency-Management-Collaborations-Learnings-Report-July-2017.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/resilience-and-emergency-management/municipal-emergency-management-enhancement-group>

Examples of where the sector shared experiences to foster continuous improvement in community recovery include the:

- South West Fires Community and Multi-agency Debriefing Plan – approved in April 2018, which included a total of 16 debriefs, ten operational and six community drop-in sessions which generated learnings relating to community engagement and connection
- The Real Time Monitoring and Evaluation teams were deployed to both the South West Fires and Scotsburn Fires which looked at aspects of relief coordination and early recovery
- Scotsburn Fires Relief and Recovery Observations
- Review of the Wye River and Separation Creek Fire Recovery – June 2017.

The Councils and Emergencies Project, led by LGV, also offered a forum where councils were able to share experiences and expertise relating to recovery activities. As part of the project, LGV undertook a significant four-month consultation process with local government and other emergency management organisations. The workshops, forums and other opportunities enabled representatives to share their experience and understanding of work councils do in emergency management such as providing guidance at recovery centres, engaging community in delivery of recovery activities and analysing community needs to inform recovery communications. The project is being progressed through SAP Actions B1 and B2.

Reviewing the arrangements for Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPCs)

The Community Recovery Review recommended that EMV review the arrangements for MEMPCs so that municipal councils' strategies for building community connections for emergency preparedness and recovery are considered as part of their overall emergency preparedness.

As part of planning reforms in the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018*, MEMPCs will no longer report to municipal councils. For this reason, EMV advises that the committees are not the appropriate vehicle to deliver individual council outcomes, as envisaged in the Community Recovery Review.

Other initiatives are underway to encourage greater consideration of community connections in councils' overall emergency preparedness. As part of the Councils and Emergencies Project, LGV released the *Councils and Emergencies Position Paper* which provides a comprehensive overview of 94 emergency management roles and activities undertaken by councils to support their local communities. It outlines specific council responsibilities relating to recovery such as engaging the community in the development and delivery of recovery activities and analysing community needs to inform recovery messaging, planning and recovery services.²⁹

Finding

IGEM considers the broader relief and recovery reform program, coordinated by EMV, demonstrates engagement with the intent of the recommendations from this review.

²⁹ Refer to www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/resilience-and-emergency-management/councils-and-emergencies-project

5 Concluding remarks

Since the publication of the three system-wide reviews conducted under IGEM's *Annual Forward Plan of Reviews 2015*, IGEM notes the progress the emergency management sector has made in relation to community preparedness, sector preparedness, and community recovery reforms.

This includes substantial initiatives such as the *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*, the Community Based Emergency Management (CBEM) approach, the *EM-LEARN Lessons Management Framework*, the preparedness model, and the ongoing development of the Resilient Recovery Strategy.

IGEM acknowledges the commitment and effort of the emergency management sector organisations involved in all initiatives outlined in the report, particularly EMV for its leadership in coordinating and delivering on a range of these achievements.

With the exception of Recommendation 1 from the Community Preparedness Review, IGEM considers all recommendations from the three system-wide reviews conducted under IGEM's *Annual Forward Plan of Reviews 2015* have been implemented or their intent has been addressed.

IGEM will continue to monitor the implementation of the single ongoing recommendation, and the implementation of all accepted recommendations from published system-wide reviews conducted under its Annual Forward Plan of Reviews.

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