

# Practice statement

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) is an independent statutory role providing assurance to government and the community in respect of emergency management arrangements in Victoria and fostering their continuous improvement

**Established through the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, IGEM works with emergency management partners and the community to strengthen emergency management arrangements and community safety in Victoria.**

IGEM identifies opportunities for continuous improvement and provides the government and community with the confidence that Victoria's emergency management arrangements are effective and that agencies are implementing the State's agreed reform agenda.

Tony Pearce is Victoria's first Inspector-General for Emergency Management. He reports to the Minister for Emergency Services (the minister).

An office provided by the Department of Justice and Community Safety assists the Inspector-General in the performance of his functions and exercise of his powers.

## Objectives

IGEM's legislated objectives are to provide assurance to government and the community in respect of the emergency management arrangements in Victoria, and foster their continuous improvement.

The objectives are integrated in practice through all of IGEM's work. To deliver on its legislative mandate, IGEM monitors, reviews and evaluates Victoria's emergency management arrangements and the sector's performance, capacity and capability.

Through reliable, evidence-based information, IGEM identifies what is working well and where improvements can be made in the state's emergency management arrangements.

IGEM strives to provide Victorians with confidence that the emergency management arrangements are effective in helping to keep communities safe.

## Why have an IGEM?

Each year Victoria's emergency management sector organisations conduct assurance activities as part of a continuous improvement program that highlights both the successes and the improvements required within the sector.

Recommendations from inquiries, reviews and evaluations in themselves do not address identified issues with the state's emergency management arrangements. It is the implementation and sustainability of targeted actions that will make the real difference.

Monitoring progress with the implementation of actions on the ground is a key part of IGEM's role. This includes monitoring the implementation of recommendations and agreed actions to ensure they are effective and sustainable in the long term.

Through sharing results of assurance activities with sector organisations, IGEM aims to build a culture of sustainable continuous improvement resulting in an ongoing exchange of information on contemporary, leading practice in emergency management.

IGEM's activities are integral to strengthening emergency management arrangements and enhancing community safety in Victoria.



## What does IGEM do?

IGEM works with its emergency management partners and Victorian communities to strengthen and where possible, improve the capability, capacity and performance of the emergency management sector.

### **Some current legislative responsibilities include:**

- maintaining the assurance framework for emergency management
- monitoring the implementation of the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of recommendations and agreed actions arising from major reviews and inquiries
- monitoring, reviewing and assessing critical infrastructure resilience and emergency management planning arrangements at the system level
- monitoring and investigating ESTA's (Triple Zero) call taking and dispatch services, and breaches of control lines by planned burns conducted by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- conducting system-wide reviews of emergency management arrangements in Victoria such as 'Victoria's preparedness for major public health emergencies, including pandemics'
- responding to requests made by the minister such the independent 'Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season'.

## How does IGEM work?

### **IGEM takes a collaborative, evidence-based and community-focused approach to its work.**

Through engaging regularly with emergency management partners and the community, IGEM objectively assesses and monitors the sector's capacity, capability and performance.

This allows IGEM to:

- identify emerging issues and risks for the emergency management sector
- provide reliable, evidence-based information on what is working well and where improvements can be made
- identify ways for Victoria's emergency management sector to continue to learn and improve
- provide government and the community with confidence that the emergency management arrangements are fit for purpose.

All IGEM's activities are guided by the **Assurance Framework for Emergency Management** which prescribes a principles-based approach to guide assurance activities that focus on emergency management in Victoria.

In addition, this framework describes the benefits of assurance activities and outlines assurance roles in the Victorian context.

IGEM plays a key role in ensuring that all its assurance activities facilitate the ongoing improvement of emergency management arrangements and support the achievement of desired community outcomes.

In consultation with sector partners, IGEM develops an Annual Forward Plan of Reviews and Forward Projection of Reviews that is focused at the strategic and system-wide level.

Through its stakeholder interactions, IGEM shares information with the sector and the community to support its contribution toward strengthening Victoria's emergency management arrangements.

Regular monitoring and reporting on progress with the implementation of improvement actions is a key part of IGEM's role, enabling it to determine if the implementation of improvements to the emergency management arrangements is effective and sustainable in the long term.

As an important part of this process, IGEM observes emergency management activities before, during and after emergencies. This involves the deployment of IGEM staff to directly observe that agreed actions are being implemented.

## Who does IGEM work with?

Emergency management is a shared responsibility. Additionally, all emergency management sector organisations have a role in assurance, and perform different assurance roles in different circumstances.

While independent of Victoria's emergency management sector organisations – including Emergency Management Victoria – IGEM works closely with these organisations in the conduct of their assurance activities.

Through its engagement with agencies, local and state government, industry, business and Victorian communities, IGEM gathers a wealth of information on emergency management practices to see what has worked well, what needs improving, and what progress has been made with implementing sustainable improvements over time.

IGEM's online **Assurance in Emergency Management** resource provides a contemporary listing of activities which have shaped, and continue to shape, Victoria's emergency management arrangements. The resource's assurance listings also demonstrate the sector's commitment to learning from past events and finding better ways of working.

In keeping with the sector's collaborative approach, IGEM will continue to work closely with emergency management sector organisations and Victoria's communities for a sustainable emergency management system that reduces the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies.

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*All of IGEM's work is about providing assurance for the purpose of fostering continuous improvement.*

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## Contact IGEM



### Phone

03 8684 7900



### Mailing address

GPO Box 4356, Melbourne VIC 3001



### Email

igem@igem.vic.gov.au



### Location

121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne VIC 3000



### Twitter

@IGEM\_Vic



### Facebook

@IGEMVictoria



### Website

igem.vic.gov.au