

Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan Update #4 2019-22

Progress Report

2021



IGEM
Inspector-General
for Emergency
Management

Publication information

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Preface

This is my sixth progress report on the implementation of the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP) by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and other sector organisations.

The SAP sets out the emergency management sector's strategic priorities along with key actions it is taking to support Victoria's vision of communities that are safer and more resilient to emergencies. The SAP is approved by the Minister for Emergency Services and updated periodically to ensure that it remains current and relevant to the sector and to Victorian communities.

IGEM is legislated to monitor and report on SAP implementation. This progress report covers the sector's implementation activity during 2021 and key developments in early 2022. The report includes my assessment that nine of the 11 SAP Update #4 2019–22 actions remain in progress – these include three actions that remain in the early stages of development.

The report reflects the operational pressures faced by organisations across the sector due to recent significant and concurrent emergency events – the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic foremost among them. Such events necessarily have an impact on implementation activity.

Significant emergency events often trigger the need for further reform across the sector, sometimes without full consideration of the resources required to implement changes effectively and in a timely manner. With this in mind, I encourage the consideration of resource capacity before future reform commitments are made. This will help ensure that organisations have sufficient time to implement sustainable improvements while still meeting their operational obligations.

I acknowledge the efforts of all organisations that have contributed to the implementation of the SAP, and thank EMV and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions in particular for their assistance in producing this report.

Tony Pearce

Inspector-General for Emergency Management

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AFAC	Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council
ANZEMC	Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee
AV	Ambulance Victoria
BRV	Bushfire Recovery Victoria
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch
CFA	Country Fire Authority
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
DRUP	Digital Radio Upgrade Program
EMA	Emergency Management Australia
EMC	Emergency Management Commissioner
EMCCSC	Emergency Management Capability and Capacity Steering Committee
EM-COP	Emergency Management Common Operating Picture
EMOC	Emergency Management Operational Communications
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
ESLG	Emergency Services Leadership Group
ESTA	Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
IDC	Inter-departmental Committee
LGV	Local Government Victoria
LSV	Life Saving Victoria
IGEM	Inspector-General for Emergency Management
MAV	Municipal Association Victoria
MDN	Mobile Data Network
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MMR	Metropolitan Mobile Radio
NPA	National Partnership Agreement
PoC	Proof of concept

PSMB	Public Safety Mobile Broadband
RCG	Regional Collaboration Group
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
REMPG	Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
RMR	Regional Mobile Radio
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SCRC	State Crisis and Resilience Council
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SEMPG	State Emergency Management Planning Committee
SMR	StateNet Mobile Radio
VicPol	Victoria Police
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service
VPF	Victorian Preparedness Framework
VRN SDM	Victorian Radio Network Service Delivery Model

Executive summary

The Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP) aims to support a sustainable and efficient emergency management system for Victorian communities. The SAP is developed and updated periodically by the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) to ensure that it continues to meet challenges facing the emergency management sector. The current SAP Update #4 2019–22 was published on the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) website in May 2020.

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) has a legislative role to monitor SAP implementation by sector organisations and report to the Minister for Emergency Services on implementation progress.

This is IGEM's sixth SAP progress report, which summarises implementation activity in relation to nine actions in SAP Update #4 2019–22 for the period 1 January to 31 December 2021 and key developments since then.¹

IGEM finds that all nine actions remain in progress (refer to Table 1):

- Four actions are progressing satisfactorily – Action 1.2, Action 2.1, Action 4.2 and Action 4.5
- One action is progressing but has experienced implementation challenges – Action 4.4
- Four actions are overdue – one of these is nearing completion (Action 4.3) and three are in the early stages of development (Action 1.1, Action 3.1 and Action 4.6).

Table 1: Summary of SAP implementation progress during 2021

ACTION NUMBER	ACTION	LEAD ORGANISATION	FINDING	STATUS
1.1	Long-term Workforce Strategy	EMV DELWP ²	IGEM notes that this action is in the early stages of development and that this action is overdue.	In progress (overdue)
1.2	Emergency Management Planning Reform	EMV	IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.	In progress
2.1	Impact Assessment Model	EMV	IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.	In progress
3.1	Volunteerism and Community Leadership	EMV	IGEM notes that this action is in the early stages of development and that this action is overdue.	In progress (overdue)
4.2	Local Government Capability and Capacity Action Plan	LGV (DJPR)	IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.	In progress
4.3	Workforce Diversity and Inclusion	EMV	IGEM notes that this action is overdue.	In progress (overdue)

¹ The report does not cover SAP Update #4 Action 1.3 and Action 4.1. Both actions were assessed as complete in IGEM's 2019 SAP progress report.

² IGEM notes that as part of the development of the next SAP update, it is intended that EMV assume sole lead responsibility for the implementation of Action 1.1.

ACTION NUMBER	ACTION	LEAD ORGANISATION	FINDING	STATUS
4.4	Capability Model	EMV	IGEM notes progress on this action.	In progress
4.5	Long-term Communications Plan	EMV	IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.	In progress
4.6	EM-COP Three Year Plan	EMV	IGEM notes that this action is in the early stages of development and that this action is overdue.	In progress (overdue)

Implementation highlights during 2021

Action 1.1 – Long-term Workforce Strategy

As a precursor to developing the long-term workforce strategy required by this action, EMV has started developing a Victorian Government Emergency Management Workforce Framework to clarify definitions, responsibilities and governance across the emergency management workforce.

Action 1.2 – Emergency Management Planning Reform

EMV has led the reform of Victoria's emergency management planning arrangements by establishing a new integrated, coordinated and comprehensive framework for planning at the state, regional and municipal levels.

Victoria completed the transition to arrangements under the new framework on 1 December 2020. Since then EMV has supported the emergency management sector's operations under the new arrangements by:

- leading the first review of the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). The inaugural SEMP was published in September 2020 and the revised version in October 2021
- facilitating the review and publication of various SEMP sub-plans for particular emergency types
- supporting ongoing regional and municipal emergency management planning arrangements
- leading sector-wide activity to test and exercise emergency management plans.

Action 2.1 – Impact Assessment Model

EMV has developed interim guidelines to assist in the planning and conduct of impact assessment following an emergency event. The Emergency Management Commissioner issued these for use during the 2021–22 summer season, replacing the previous guidelines issued in 2015. Final impact assessment guidelines are scheduled for release in mid-2022.

EMV has also identified additional updates required to the data portal and visualisation tools used by the emergency management sector for impact assessment, with funding in place to deliver the updates once resources can be secured.

Action 4.2 – Local Government Capability and Capacity Action Plan

Local Government Victoria (LGV) – a division of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) – is addressing Action 4.2 through the third and final stage of the Councils and Emergencies Project. Phase Three involves engagement with councils and other emergency management sector organisations to address the local government emergency management capability and capacity gaps identified during Phase Two.

In 2021 a consultant engaged by LGV held engagement sessions and interviews with councils and sector organisations and produced a consultation report that:

- describes the capability and capacity issues councils face in carrying out their emergency management responsibilities, across the themes of people, resources, governance, systems and processes
- identifies potential actions to address the issues.

Building on the consultation report, LGV plans to submit a final Strengthening Councils Emergency Management Action Plan to SCRC for endorsement later in 2022.

Action 4.4 – Capability Model

Although progress during 2021 was slower than anticipated due to the challenges of cross-sector coordination involving large numbers of stakeholders and operational pressures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies, EMV has:

- advanced the assessments for two of the 21 Victorian Preparedness Framework capabilities to near completion (for 'Operational Management' and 'Fire Management and Suppression')
- initiated two further assessments (for 'Fatality Management' and 'Search and Rescue')
- developed a standardised template report to provide consistency across future assessments.

Under a revised schedule, EMV plans to complete assessments for all 21 capabilities by December 2024.

Alongside the capability assessments, EMV is undertaking a public review of the Victorian Preparedness Framework and the higher-level Victorian Preparedness Goal that aims to consolidate them into a single interactive document. The review involves community and agency consultation on different aspects of the framework and goal and is due for completion in June 2022.

Action 4.5 – Long-term Communications Plan

Led by EMV, the Emergency Management Operational Communications (EMOC) Program is Victoria's long-term plan to maintain, consolidate and evolve the sector's operational communications capability.

In November 2021 EMV issued a revised Program Management Plan for Stage 2 of the Digital Radio Upgrade Program (DRUP), which comprises six interconnected projects. Under the Regional Mobile Radio (RMR) Network Project, EMV worked with Ambulance Victoria (AV) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to assess network capacity and document coverage requirements ahead of the planned transition of AV regional and DELWP communications to the digital RMR network.

In February 2021 EMV initiated the Victorian Radio Network Service Delivery Model Review to:

- determine the State's preferred radio network service delivery model beyond 2025–26
- identify the implications for various existing operational communications contracts
- identify the strategy and timeframes to implement the review outcomes.

EMV established a multi-agency working group to progress the review and undertook comprehensive consultation during 2021 and early 2022, with a decision on the future service delivery model option expected later in 2022. Some DRUP Stage 2 project elements are contingent on the review outcomes and progressed more slowly during 2021 as a result.

EMV has continued to support the Australian Government's implementation of a Public Safety Mobile Broadband (PSMB) capability for Australia's public safety agencies and PSMB proof of concept trials led by the NSW Telco Authority on behalf of participating jurisdictions.

Action 4.6 – EM-COP Three Year Plan

Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EM-COP) is an online communication, planning and collaboration platform for emergency management personnel.

The 2020–21 Victorian State Budget provided \$4 million funding for the maintenance and upgrade of EM-COP and the VicEmergency information and warnings platform.

In 2021 a business case for the upgrades was approved, and EMV currently plans to complete the EM-COP upgrade between June 2022 and June 2023.

Actions with limited progress during 2021

Some other EMV-led SAP actions have experienced little recent progress:

- EMV has yet to confirm how it will implement **Action 3.1** – explore and develop approaches that allow different types of leaders to emerge from the evolving landscape of volunteerism. IGEM encourages EMV to address this during 2022, recognising the importance of volunteerism and community leadership to emergency management outcomes and sustainability, and noting several years with little progress made on this front.
- EMV has collated data to complete the second element of **Action 4.3** – an analysis of gender representation, diversity and inclusion in sector communications. However, completion of the analysis has been delayed due to competing operational priorities and staffing constraints.



Storm over Melbourne (Source: Laura McDougall)

1 Introduction

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) was established in 2014. IGEM provides assurance to the Victorian Government and the community on the state's emergency management arrangements and fosters their continuous improvement. The Inspector-General is a Governor in Council appointment under the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act).

IGEM has a legislative obligation under section 64(1)(e) of the Act to report to the Minister for Emergency Services (the minister) on the government's implementation of the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP).

The SAP aims to support a sustainable and efficient emergency management system for Victoria and is updated periodically to remain relevant in the face of emerging challenges to the state's emergency management sector.

Section 2 of this report provides more information on the SAP and Section 3 provides more information on IGEM's reporting approach and progress summaries for the nine active actions in SAP Update #4 (*Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan Update #4 2019–2022*).³ The progress summaries cover implementation activity between 1 January and 31 December 2021 and key developments in early 2022.

IGEM has provided this report – its sixth on SAP implementation progress – to the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) for information and to the minister for approval to publish on the IGEM website (igem.vic.gov.au).



Source: EMV

³ emv.vic.gov.au/publications/victorian-emergency-management-strategic-action-plan-sap-update-4-2019-22

2 Background

2.1 The Strategic Action Plan

The SCRC is Victoria's peak body for advising the minister on emergency management policy and strategy, and its implementation.

Section 12 of the Act requires the SCRC to develop a rolling three-year Strategic Action Plan. SAP Update #4 was approved by the minister in consultation with other relevant ministers and published on the Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) website in May 2020.

SAP Update #4 outlines four priorities with corresponding actions to help Victoria achieve its emergency management vision of safer and more resilient communities (refer to Table 2). EMV and other organisations are responsible for leading SAP actions and updating the SCRC on implementation progress.

Table 2: SAP Update #4 priorities and actions

PRIORITY	ACTION NUMBER	ACTION	LEAD ORGANISATION
Priority One – Drive High Level Reform toward 2030	1.1	Long-term Workforce Strategy	EMV DELWP ⁴
	1.2	Emergency Management Planning Reform	EMV
	1.3	Emergency Management Performance Standards	EMV
Priority Two – Reduce Risk and Build Resilience	2.1	Impact Assessment Model	EMV
Priority Three – Enhance Inclusion and Empower and Build the Capacity of Communities	3.1	Volunteerism and Community Leadership	EMV
Priority Four – Foster Strategic Capability	4.1	Councils and Emergencies (Phases 1 and 2)	LGV (DJPR)
	4.2	Local Government Capability and Capacity Action Plan	LGV (DJPR)
	4.3	Workforce Diversity and Inclusion	EMV
	4.4	Capability Model	EMV
	4.5	Long-term Communications Plan	EMV
	4.6	EM-COP Three Year Plan	EMV

⁴ IGEM notes that as part of the development of the next SAP update, it is intended that EMV assume sole lead responsibility for the implementation of Action 1.1.

The future of the SAP

In 2021 and early 2022 EMV undertook consultation with the emergency management sector to develop a strategic roadmap to guide reform over the coming decade and inform the development of future SAP updates.

As part of the process, SCRC will consider the strategic roadmap's outline and priorities, and the sector's approach to the next SAP update.

2.2 IGEM's stakeholders

IGEM values the support and cooperation provided by EMV and Local Government Victoria (LGV) – part of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) and acknowledges the feedback they provided on a consultation draft of this report.

Highlighting the commitment and importance of organisations working together in order to deliver emergency management reforms, other organisations that supported SAP implementation during 2021 include:

- Ambulance Victoria
- Australian Red Cross
- Bushfire Recovery Victoria
- Corrections Victoria
- Country Fire Authority
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Transport
- Department of Treasury and Finance
- Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority
- Fire Rescue Victoria
- Life Saving Victoria
- Local government authorities
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- The Salvation Army Australia
- Victoria Police
- Victoria State Emergency Service
- Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry
- Victorian Council of Social Service
- Victorian Managed Insurance Authority.

2.3 The Assurance Framework for Emergency Management

The *Assurance Framework for Emergency Management* guides assurance activities conducted by Victoria's emergency management sector, including IGEM's implementation monitoring.⁵ The framework seeks to improve assurance activities through the application of four principles:

- **Continuous improvement** – assurance providers appreciating the complexity of emergency management in a rapidly changing context, valuing parts of the emergency management system that continue to work well and seeing where incremental or immediate improvement or innovation is necessary.
- **Collaboration and coordination** – assurance providers working together and organising assurance activities to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Reducing burden** – assurance providers respecting and minimising the amount of time and resources which stakeholders need to devote to an assurance activity.
- **Adding value** – assurance providers maximising the potential benefits of assurance activities, by being proactive and risk-based and by reporting the results of assurance activities in a timely manner and in a way that can be easily understood by decision makers.



Responding to storm damage in Blackburn, 31 October 2021 (Source: IGEM)

⁵ igem.vic.gov.au/publications/igem-reports/assurance-framework-for-emergency-management

3 Progress summaries

3.1 Understanding the progress summaries

This section summarises and provides IGEM's assessment of implementation progress during 2021 for the nine active actions in SAP Update #4, organised by the overarching SAP priority.

SAP Update #4 actions reported as complete in IGEM's previous progress reports are not included.⁶

The table at the start of each progress summary reports an **implementation status** of 'complete', 'in progress', or 'in progress (overdue)' along with the action's timeframes (start date and planned completion date) and lead organisation.

The **planned completion date** for each action is as stated in SAP Update #4, unless the lead organisation has subsequently received approval from the relevant project sponsor for a timeframe extension. In such instances, both the SAP Update #4 and revised dates are reported. The planned completion dates for several actions are currently under revision by EMV.

Findings at the end of each progress summary provide further information on the progress of each action – for example, whether it is progressing satisfactorily, is overdue, or is in the early stages of development.

In developing statuses and findings, IGEM takes into consideration factors such as the resources available to lead organisations and competing organisational and sector priorities.

The statuses and findings are based on analysis of an EMV-coordinated progress update provided to IGEM in February 2022 and other relevant information including:

- internal quarterly status reports prepared by the project leads for each action
- publicly available publications and webpages
- documents provided to the Inspector-General in their role as an SCRC observer
- documents collected through other IGEM assurance activities.

The progress update and status reports were endorsed by the heads of lead organisations before provision to IGEM. IGEM securely stores and manages all sensitive documents in line with the confidentiality requirements of section 72 of the Act.

Like all assurance providers, the level of assurance that IGEM can provide is based on the availability of relevant and reliable supporting evidence. If unable to view supporting evidence, IGEM will report activity as something that has been 'advised' by the lead organisation. This represents a lower level of assurance.

The progress summary for Action 1.2 includes **observations** on the implementation of Victoria's emergency management planning reforms, in accordance with IGEM's legislated function under section 64(1)(gb) of the Act to monitor, review and assess emergency management planning at a system level.

⁶ Action 1.3: Emergency Management Performance Standards and Action 4.1: Councils and Emergencies (Phases 1 and 2) were both reported as complete in IGEM's 2019 SAP progress report.

3.2 Priority One - Drive High Level Reform Toward 2030

Objective of Priority One:

A vision and plan for the future of emergency management in Victoria, that addresses the challenges and opportunities posed in 2030.

ACTION 1.1 - LONG-TERM WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Develop and implement a long-term workforce strategy that enhances our understanding of evolving workforce challenges and opportunities and assists in the delivery of a diverse, inclusive, competent and sustainable workforce.

Commencement	2015–16 Q2
Planned completion	2020 (completion date currently being revised)
Lead agency	EMV and DELWP ⁷
Status	In progress (overdue)

IGEM's 2020 SAP progress report noted that Action 1.1 had recently recommenced, having previously been placed on hold in May 2019.

As a precursor to developing a long-term workforce strategy, Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) is leading the development of a Victorian Government Emergency Management Workforce Framework to clarify definitions, responsibilities and governance across the workforce.

EMV advised that the long-term workforce strategy, once developed, is expected to guide the sector's achievement of outcomes under the proposed Emergency Management Outcomes Framework.

EMV also advised that a revised planned completion date for this action has yet to be confirmed.

Related initiatives

EMV is currently negotiating memorandums of understanding with government departments and selected emergency management organisations to ensure that staff are provided with consistent conditions and remuneration for participation in the State Control Centre surge workforce. EMV provided IGEM with draft procedures being developed to assist these organisations in understanding and managing their emergency management surge workforces on an ongoing basis.

Two other recent EMV-led initiatives are targeted at ensuring a competent and sustainable emergency management workforce for Victoria:

- an Incident Management Team training and accreditation review
- an emergency management sector training and development masterplan.

⁷ IGEM notes that as part of the development of the next SAP update, it is intended that EMV assume sole lead responsibility for the implementation of Action 1.1.

Both initiatives form part of the Victorian Government's response to IGEM's *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 1* report. EMV is currently consolidating the initiatives via a Learning Reform Action Plan governed by the newly-established Learning and Development Subcommittee of the Emergency Management Capability and Capacity Steering Committee (EMCCSC).

Finding

IGEM notes that this action is in the early stages of development and that this action is overdue.

ACTION 1.2 - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING REFORM

Lead reform to Victoria's emergency management planning arrangements by establishing a new integrated, coordinated and comprehensive framework for planning at state, regional and municipal levels.

Commencement	2016–17 Q1
Planned completion	2023
Lead agency	EMV
Status	In progress

EMV has led the reform of Victoria's emergency management planning arrangements by establishing a new integrated, coordinated and comprehensive framework for planning at the state, regional and municipal levels. Previous IGEM SAP and Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry progress reports provide details of EMV's activity to implement the reform.

Transition to the new framework was completed through a phased approach. New state-level arrangements came into effect on 25 September 2019, followed by new regional-level arrangements on 30 September 2020, and new municipal-level arrangements on 1 December 2020.

During 2021 EMV supported the emergency management sector's operations under the new arrangements at the state, regional and municipal levels. Key activity includes:

- leading the first review of the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)
- facilitating the review and publication of SEMP sub-plans
- supporting ongoing regional and municipal emergency management planning arrangements
- leading the testing and exercising of emergency management plans.

An EMV program office supported reform implementation and an Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) chaired by the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) provided oversight and advice. EMV plans to seek SCRC endorsement to establish an ongoing State Emergency Management Planning Committee (SEMP) in place of the IDC to support integrated, coordinated and comprehensive emergency management planning into the future.

IGEM recognises the importance of enduring state-level governance arrangements to oversee emergency management planning arrangements, and positively notes the intent of greater integration and connection across the planning tiers that SEMPC sets out to deliver.

IGEM has a legislated function under section 64(1)(gb) of the Act to monitor, review and assess emergency management planning at a system level. This progress summary includes IGEM's observations on the implementation of the emergency management planning reform between October 2021 and February 2022 based on its observer role on the IDC.⁸

IGEM also has an optional observer role on Regional Emergency Planning Committees (REMPs) by arrangement with REMPC chairs.

⁸ Previous observations are included in IGEM's *Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry – Progress Report 2021*.

Review of the Victorian State Emergency Management Plan

SCRC approved the first SEMP on 10 September 2020 and it was published on 30 September 2020.⁹ The SEMP sets out arrangements providing for emergency mitigation, response and recovery, and specifies the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management.

During 2021 EMV led a review of the SEMP in coordination with emergency management sector organisations. The review considered learnings from the 2020–21 summer season, the COVID-19 pandemic response, and items held over at the time of the SEMP's initial publication.

SCRC approved the revised SEMP on 7 October 2021, with further changes incorporated in response to IGEM's *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 2* report. The revised SEMP came into effect on 27 October 2021 and is available at emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/sempp

Revisions coming out of the review include updates to agency roles and responsibilities (including those to reflect machinery of government changes), the introduction of Zone Control arrangements,¹⁰ and additional information on the transition to recovery.

Revisions in response to IGEM's *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 2* report include the introduction of a Regional Emergency Relief Coordinator role and revisions to role statements for municipal councils, Bushfire Recovery Victoria, EMV, and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

The next review of the SEMP is due to commence in late 2022. EMV maintains an issues register of items for consideration in upcoming SEMP review cycles.

Review of SEMP sub-plans

SEMP sub-plans¹¹ detail specific arrangements for particular emergency types that contextualise the emergency management arrangements outlined in the SEMP. Responsible control agencies lead the periodic review of individual sub-plans.

EMV supports this process by providing guidance on sub-plan review requirements, contributing to reviews, and publishing approved sub-plans on its website.

IGEM observes that while lead agencies undertook a consultative process in the development of sub-plans, in some cases IDC members raised concerns regarding the timing of consultation and approval processes. These concerns included consistency around whom requests for feedback are directed to within agencies, and the limited amount of time provided for review and endorsement of the plans.

IGEM notes consultation on some sub-plans was held over the summer season and during a period of heightened and sustained operational activity, which may have exacerbated these issues. IGEM positively notes that EMV recirculated its sub-plan consultation guidance to IDC members to address these matters.

The viral pandemic, health, extreme heat and earthquake sub-plans are all scheduled for review during 2022.

Regional emergency management planning arrangements

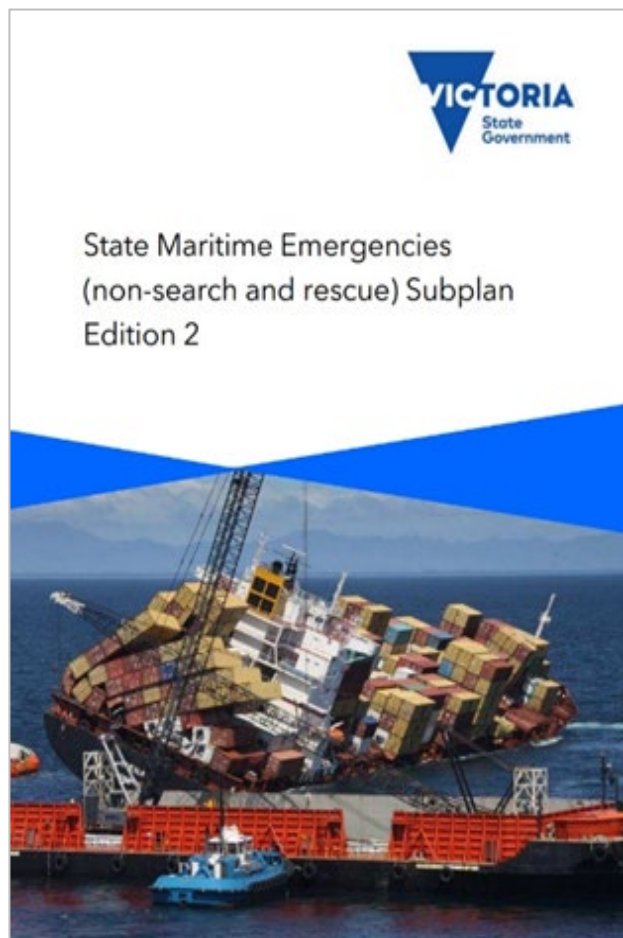
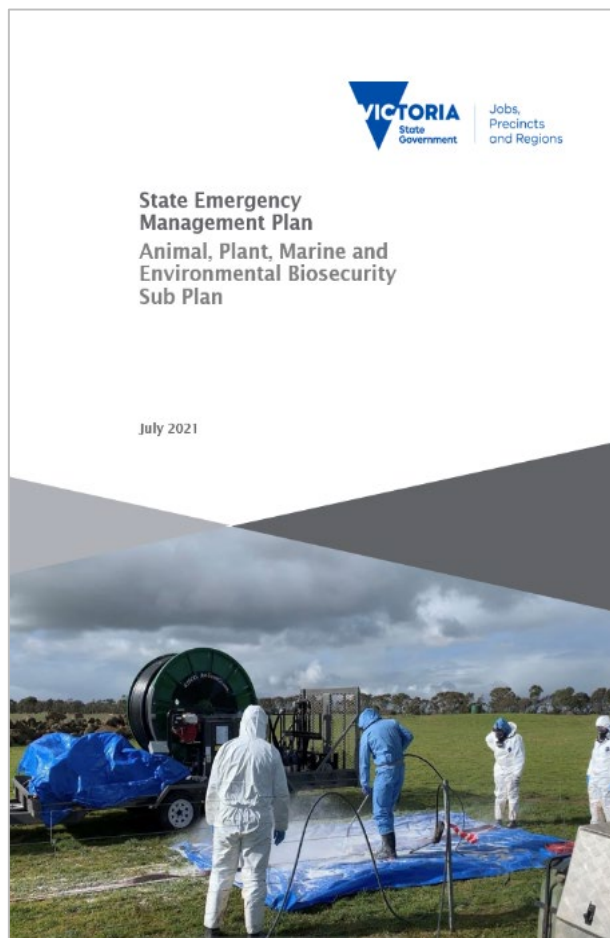
IGEM's 2020 SAP progress report provides details of the establishment of Victoria's eight REMPCs and the assistance EMV provided to REMPCs to develop their Regional Emergency Management Plans (REMPs), which were approved by the EMC and published in November 2020. The REMPs are available at emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/emergency-management-planning/rempp.

EMV maintains a range of regional emergency management planning resources and convenes an ongoing Regional Collaboration Group (RCG) comprising REMPC chairs and deputy chairs to support regional level planning and interoperability. During 2021 the RCG met on 18 March, 3 August and 21 October.

⁹ The SEMP supersedes the State Emergency Response Plan and State Relief and Recovery Plan within the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*.

¹⁰ At the EMC's discretion multiple regions may be combined to form pre-determined Zones and Zone Control. These arrangements will be in place until determined otherwise by the EMC or the State Response Controller.

¹¹ Formerly Sub-Plans of the now superseded State Emergency Response Plan.



In July 2021 EMV commenced a Regional Emergency Risk Assessment Project to develop a method to undertake risk assessments at the regional planning level and facilitate assessments for a limited number of emergency risks. To complete the assessments, EMV engaged a consultant to facilitate 16 workshops between September and November 2021 across all eight REMPCs.

In December 2021 the consultant provided EMV with the final risk assessment results and a summary report. The risk assessments will be used by REMPCs to inform future versions of their REMPs and identify any specific sub-plans and mitigation, response and recovery actions needed at the regional level.

IGEM observes that resourcing concerns were raised in relation to maintaining regional emergency risk assessments as part of the REMPC workload. IGEM positively notes that EMV plans to discuss support for REMPCs further with REMPC chairs.

Municipal emergency management planning arrangements

Under the new arrangements, REMPCs are responsible for approving their region's Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs). As existing MEMPs become due for review between 2021 and 2023, each Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee is required to update its MEMP to ensure consistency with the new arrangements and submit it to the relevant REMPC for approval. EMV has aligned the planned completion date of Action 1.2 to the expected completion of the current review cycle in December 2023.

EMV maintains a range of resources to assist emergency management planning activities at the municipal level, including assurance templates designed to ensure plans are consistent with the new arrangements.

Emergency management plan exercising¹²

In mid-2021 EMV and an external facilitator conducted three emergency scenario tests as part of a REMP and SEMP Scenario Testing Pilot Project to increase planning committee familiarity with control arrangements in the plans.

- Barwon South West REMP, foot and mouth disease scenario, 16 June 2021
- North West Metro REMP, earthquake scenario, 25 June 2021
- SEMP, energy disruption scenario, 6 July 2021.

IGEM observed the scenario tests and considers there is value in future REMP scenario testing focusing on clarifying the purpose of the regional planning level and its relationship to the state planning level. IGEM positively notes that the EMC's Statement of Intent for REMPCs encourages them to complete scenario tests of their REMPs and incorporate learnings into future versions of the plans.

To provide guidance for the future testing of emergency management plans, EMV and the external facilitator prepared an evaluation report incorporating feedback from scenario test participants. The draft report was provided to participants for review in early November 2021 and approved by the IDC on 22 November 2021 pending final changes.

Building on the pilot project, EMV recently commenced an Emergency Management Plan Exercising Project 2022–23, which seeks to deliver four community-centred scenario exercises with emergency management partners to explore catastrophic events, complex responses (such as evacuations) and operations under the shared responsibility model. The IDC approved the project plan on 2 February 2022 and the exercise concept plan for the first exercise on 15 March 2022.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

¹² The projects discussed in this section form part of the Victorian Government's response to IGEM's *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 1* report.

3.3 Priority Two - Reduce Risk and Build Resilience

Objective of Priority Two:

Increased capacity and capability of local communities to identify, mitigate and reduce risk and to be ready to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency.

ACTION 2.1 - IMPACT ASSESSMENT MODEL

Implement a comprehensive impact assessment model across all hazards and all phases of emergency management that includes processes to collect, analyse, and communicate impact information that strengthens understanding of community diversity and values.

The system will inform decision making, planning processes and activities by communities and the sector, providing opportunities for tailored support and engagement based on community need.

Commencement	2015–16
Planned completion	2020 30 December 2021 (revised – completion date currently being further revised)
Lead agency	EMV
Status	In progress

Impact assessment measures the effects of emergencies on communities through the collection and analysis of impact-related data. It aims to provide timely, accurate, and comprehensive information to departments, agencies, and councils to inform decision-making and the planning of relief and recovery programs.

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) is progressing Action 2.1 through the EM-Impact Program of three connected projects:

- **Impact Assessment** – online reporting and visualisation tools for initial and secondary impact assessment, defining emergency impact metrics, and assigning data collection responsibilities across the emergency management sector.
- **Resilience Dashboard** – collating and presenting community resilience data to inform impact assessment and recovery planning and help evaluate the outcomes of recovery initiatives.
- **Needs Assessment** – processes and products for use by responder agencies and other organisations in the assessment of community and individual recovery needs.

Project governance is provided by a Program Control Group and a Program Working Group, both with broad emergency management sector representation.

IGEM's 2020 SAP progress report noted that Action 2.1 had been placed on hold due to functional and structural changes within EMV. It has since secured funding to progress the action through the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Disaster Risk Reduction's Risk and Resilience Grants Program and a Treasurer's Advance. EMV advised that the action recommenced in April 2021 with the completion date currently under review.

The remainder of this progress summary provides an overview of implementation activity during 2021.

Impact Assessment

Drawing on lessons learned from using the online tools during the June and October 2021 extreme weather events, EMV has developed interim guidelines to assist in the planning and conduct of impact assessment following an emergency event.

The Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) issued the interim guidelines for use during the 2021–22 summer season, replacing guidelines issued in 2015. They are available to emergency management personnel via EM-COP¹³ and include:

- guiding principles for impact assessment
- updated sections on initial impact assessment, secondary impact assessment and post emergency needs assessment
- updated roles, responsibilities and processes to reflect current doctrine and the SEMP
- data sharing and privacy considerations and requirements
- guidance on data collection and on accessing the EM-Impact data portal and visualisation tools.

EMV intends to incorporate feedback on the interim guidelines, including learnings from a desktop exercise, into final impact assessment guidelines planned for release in mid-2022.

The final guidelines will also reflect advice from the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner on data sharing and privacy considerations and may also incorporate current work by the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee¹⁴ on post emergency needs assessment.

Across the second half of 2021 EMV developed an IT requirements document identifying additional updates required for the EM-Impact data portal and visualisation tools. In November 2021 EMV secured a \$200,000 NPA Risk and Resilience Grant to deliver the IT requirements.

In the same month EMV released a request for quote seeking IT development resources, however no responses were received. EMV advised that it is now undertaking a cross-agency and departmental review for potential internal government resource availability and support.

During 2021 EMV also engaged with Local Government Victoria to ensure consistency across state and local government secondary impact assessment doctrine and with Bushfire Recovery Victoria (as the lead agency for state and regional recovery coordination) to identify potential impact assessment-related data management and reporting efficiencies.

Resilience Dashboard

In December 2021 the Project Working Group began a review of the resilience dashboard themes and model. EMV intends to complete dataset reviews, system and dashboard updates and end-user training in the first half of 2022.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

¹³ EM-COP is an online communication and planning tool that enables personnel to work together, quickly share information and make strategic decisions.

¹⁴ ANZEMC is responsible for informing, influencing and advocating for national policies and capabilities that reduce disaster risk, minimise the potential for harm and uphold public trust and confidence in emergency management arrangements. Its membership comprises senior officials from each Australian, state and territory government, plus a member from New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association. For more information see recovery.gov.au/australia-new-zealand-emergency-management-committee

3.4 Priority Three - Enhance Inclusion and Empower and Build the Capacity of Communities

Objective of Priority Three:

Increased capacity and capability of volunteers to engage with, and support, emergency management response in Victoria, before, during and after an emergency event.

ACTION 3.1 - VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Explore and develop approaches that allow different types of leaders to emerge from the evolving landscape of volunteerism.

Commencement	2020 ¹⁵
Planned completion	2020 (completion date currently being revised)
Lead agency	EMV
Status	In progress (overdue)

Action 3.1 appeared in SAP Update #4 as an action combining two previous SAP Update #3 actions related to community leadership and volunteers in emergency management.

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) advised that it is updating its approach to this action to better reflect the changing environment of volunteering in Victoria and that a revised timeframe for completion has yet to be confirmed. EMV provided IGEM with draft project documentation reflecting its proposed updated approach. EMV advised that it plans to confirm the updated approach in 2022, including appropriate funding and resourcing arrangements.

IGEM notes that limited progress has been made to set an approach to this action over the course of several years. Recognising the importance of volunteerism and community leadership to emergency management outcomes and sustainability, IGEM encourages EMV to expedite this.

Related initiatives

Other EMV-led projects have recently involved work with volunteer representatives and other emergency management sector stakeholders to build Victoria's volunteer capacity and capability:

- **Review of the 2015 Strategic Priorities for Emergency Management Volunteering in Victoria.** In relation to volunteer leadership, this project identified a need to better understand volunteer motivation and develop the skills needed by volunteers to engage, lead, support and manage people.
- **Valuing Volunteers – Better Connecting and Working Together.** This project identified opportunities to develop and use enhanced information and communication technologies to better connect, communicate and work with emergency management volunteers.

Finding

IGEM notes that this action is in the early stages of development and that this action is overdue.

¹⁵ SAP Update #4 records that Action 3.1 commenced in 2020. The action was created through the merging of two existing SAP Update #3 actions: Action A1+A3, which commenced in 2017–18 Q3, and Action D3, which commenced in 2018–19 Q3.

3.5 Priority Four – Foster Strategic Capability

Objective of Priority Four:

A sophisticated and innovative workforce that embraces a positive culture and promotes respect, leadership, cooperation, innovation and diversity.

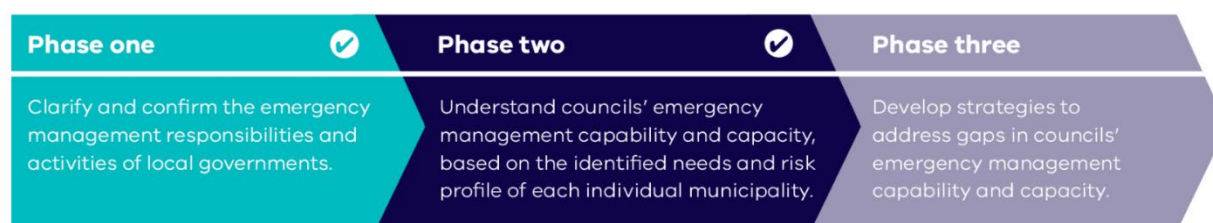
ACTION 4.2 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY ACTION PLAN

Drawing from the above¹⁶, develop action plans to address capability and capacity gaps.

Commencement	January 2021
Planned completion	2020 31 December 2021 (revised)
Lead agency	LGV (DJPR)
Status	In progress

Local Government Victoria (LGV) is addressing Action 4.2 through Phase Three of the Councils and Emergencies Project.

Figure 1: Phases of the Councils and Emergencies Project



Source: LGV (DJPR)

Action 4.2 builds on the work completed by LGV as part of Action 4.1 to clarify and confirm the emergency management roles of local government (Phase One) and assess councils' capability and capacity to meet their emergency management obligations (Phase Two). IGEM reported Action 4.1 as complete in its 2019 SAP progress report.

Phase Three of the project involves engagement with councils and other emergency management sector organisations to address the capability and capacity gaps identified during Phase Two.

Phase Three is overseen by a Program Control Board comprising Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (LGV and Emergency Coordination and Resilience), Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and EMV representatives.

LGV began work on Phase Three in January 2021. In April 2021 LGV engaged a consultant to plan and deliver facilitated engagement sessions with the sector and produce a consultation report.

¹⁶ Drawing from Action 4.1: Clarify and confirm the emergency management roles of local government and assess councils' capability and capacity to meet their emergency obligations.

From May to June 2021 the consultant conducted nine council workshops covering all eight Victorian emergency management regions and held 11 interviews with emergency management organisations. IGEM observed three of the workshops:

- Barwon South-West region on 31 May 2021
- Gippsland region on 2 June 2021
- Southern Metro region on 3 June 2021.

In late June 2021 the consultant produced a report providing an overview of the feedback received from the workshops and interviews. The report contains two main sections – the first describes the capability and capacity issues participants identified that councils face in undertaking their emergency management roles, across the themes of people, resources, governance, systems and processes. The second provides a list of actions identified by participants that might address those issues.

LGV circulated the consultation report to councils for comment on 31 August 2021 and to emergency management organisations on 10 September 2021. LGV also held a council Chief Executive Officer (CEO) forum on 8 September 2021 to allow CEOs to provide further comment.

LGV submitted the consultation report to the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) for noting on 2 December 2021 and updated it on the project.

LGV plans to submit a Strengthening Councils Emergency Management Action Plan to the Emergency Management Capacity and Capability Steering Committee and then to SCRC for endorsement later in 2022.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

ACTION 4.3 - WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Develop a comprehensive shared vision and articulation of the case for change on gender representation, diversity and inclusion in Fire and Emergency; and to conduct an analysis of gender representation, diversity and inclusion in communications across the sector.

Commencement	1 July 2019
Planned completion	2019 (completion date currently being revised)
Lead agency	EMV
Status	In progress (overdue)

The case for change on gender representation, diversity and inclusion

IGEM reported the first element of this action – the development of a comprehensive shared vision and articulation of the case for change on gender representation, diversity and inclusion in fire and emergency – as complete in its 2020 SAP progress report.

IGEM noted EMV and the EMC's support to prepare the November 2020 Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) report *Gender Balance in Fire and Emergency – Going Beyond 'it's the right thing to do' – The Case for Change*. The report presents a shared vision for gender balance, diversity and inclusion in fire and emergency services.

In March 2022 the AFAC Champions of Change Fire and Emergency Group published its *2021 Progress Report*, which provides an update on actions taken and outcomes achieved over the past 12 months towards advancing more women into leadership and building professional, respectful and inclusive environments across the sector.

Both reports are available on the website championsofchangecoalition.org



Analysis of gender representation, diversity and inclusion in communications

EMV advised that recent progress on this action has been affected by members of the responsible team needing to support other operational priorities and that it is currently recruiting to fill a vacant position on the team.

EMV provided IGEM with data on gender representation, diversity and inclusion in images distributed via EMV communications platforms¹⁷ during 2019–20 and 2020–21. Analysis, findings and improvement opportunities will be identified and presented in a report, which EMV expects to complete later in 2022.

Related to this action, EMV worked with sector partners on a public communications campaign highlighting the contributions of women in the emergency aviation sector. This campaign ran from 8 to 14 March 2021 (inclusive of International Women's Day and International Women in Aviation Week) and included a series of images of women from various agencies in a variety of aviation roles. For more information see emv.vic.gov.au/news/emv-celebrates-women-of-aviation

Finding

IGEM notes that this action is overdue.

¹⁷ VicEmergency Facebook, EMV LinkedIn, VicEmergency Twitter, the EMC's Twitter, EMV News Twitter and the EMV News website.

ACTION 4.4 - CAPABILITY MODEL

Progress to an all-emergencies capability model that captures and baselines the state's current capability and capacity and identifies gaps and opportunities to leverage capability across government, agencies, business, and community.

Commencement	2015–16 Q1
Planned completion	2021 (completion date currently being revised)
Lead agency	EMV
Status	In progress

The Emergency Management Capability and Capacity project was initiated in 2015. As part of the project, the Victorian Preparedness Framework (VPF) – published May 2017 and updated May 2018 – was developed with the view to identify and describe a set of 21 core capabilities required to manage emergencies in Victoria. The core capabilities and the critical tasks outlined in the VPF set the foundation for how the State prepares for, responds to and recovers from emergency incidents. The VPF can be found at emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/emergency-management-capability-in-victoria/victorian-preparedness-framework

Capability assessments

During 2021 and early 2022 EMV and sector organisations continued to capture and baseline the State's current capability and capacity through advancing capability assessments for four of the 21 core capabilities outlined in the VPF.¹⁸

IGEM's 2020 SAP progress report outlined the commencement of the 'Operational Management' and 'Fire Management and Suppression' capability assessments. In March 2021, EMV provided the Emergency Management Capability and Capacity Steering Committee (EMCCSC) with a presentation on the progress of the assessments. At the same meeting, the EMCCSC endorsed the commencement of two further capability assessments – 'Fatality Management' and 'Search and Rescue'. EMV has also developed a standardised reporting template to support the remaining capability assessments.

The 'Operational Management' and 'Fire Management and Suppression' assessments are now nearing completion. EMV presented the EMCCSC with draft reports for the assessments at its November 2021 meeting. The EMCCSC determined that further validation was required prior to the assessments being finalised.

EMV has also begun consultation with agencies on the 'Fatality Management' and 'Search and Rescue' assessments, including meetings with the coordinating agencies.

IGEM notes that EMV and the sector has required further time to complete these assessments than originally anticipated. EMV advised that the challenges associated with this action include the need for cross-sector collaboration – the coordination of assessments involving large numbers of stakeholders and the reliance on stakeholder availability to progress them – and operational pressures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies. EMV now anticipates having all 21 capability assessments completed by December 2024.

¹⁸ Six initial capability assessments completed in 2018–19 using an agency self-assessment approach were not provided to SCRC. EMV subsequently modified and expanded its approach to include a combination of agency maturity assessments, physical assessments against sector capability targets, and assessments of exercises or actual emergency events.

Victorian Preparedness Framework and Victorian Preparedness Goal Review¹⁹

EMV has commenced a review of the Victorian Preparedness Framework and the higher-level Victorian Preparedness Goal (published July 2016) that aims to consolidate the two documents into a single interactive document. The review involves community and agency consultation on different aspects of both the framework and goal.

EMV conducted community consultation through the Engage Victoria platform between January and March 2022. The review is due to be completed in June 2022. For more information refer to engage.vic.gov.au/review-victorian-preparedness-framework-and-goal

Finding

IGEM notes progress on this action.

ACTION 4.5 - LONG-TERM COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Implement the sector's long-term communications plan, with the longer-term aim of moving to a single integrated voice network and sector-wide broadband data service. Review and adapt rollout in line with social, technical, industry and economic environments, and emerging technologies where appropriate.

Commencement	2015–16 Q1
Planned completion	2020 31 December 2022 (revised) ²⁰
Lead agency	EMV
Status	In progress

Action 4.5 intends to deliver the Emergency Management Operational Communications (EMOC) Program, Victoria's long-term plan to maintain, consolidate and evolve the sector's operational communications capability.

Over a 10 to 15-year period, the EMOC Program aims to move operational communications from their current state – a variety of devices such as pagers, radios and mobile data terminals operating on multiple networks – to smart devices operating on a single Public Safety Mobile Broadband network.

The Emergency Services Leadership Group (ESLG) provides overarching EMOC Program governance, supported by a range of multi-agency operational and advisory committees and working groups.

The EMOC Program involves organisations including Ambulance Victoria (AV), Corrections Victoria, Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), Life Saving Victoria (LSV), Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) and Victoria Police (VicPol).

On 11 November 2021 the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety approved additional emergency management technology resourcing to support the delivery of operational communications and other critical technology functions by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV).

¹⁹ The review forms part of the Victorian Government's response to IGEM's *Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector*.

²⁰ This planned completion date aligns to the three-year rolling SAP timeframe. EMOC Program implementation will continue well beyond this date.

Key elements of the EMOC Program advanced during 2021 include:

- the Digital Radio Upgrade Program (DRUP)
- Public Safety Mobile Broadband (PSMB)
- the Victorian Radio Network Service Delivery Model (VRN SDM) Review.

Digital Radio Upgrade Program

IGEM's 2020 SAP progress report noted the completion of DRUP Stage 1 in August 2019 and the commencement of Stage 2.

Stage 1 transitioned Corrections Victoria and VicPol to a secure, encrypted digital radio network and transitioned CFA's outer-metropolitan brigades, LSV and VICSES to a digital radio network.

Stage 2 comprises six projects being delivered in parallel:

- Regional Mobile Radio (RMR) Network Project – upgrading the existing RMR digital network to meet operational requirements ahead of AV regional and DELWP transitioning onto the network.
- StateNet Mobile Radio (SMR) Contract Extension – ensuring service continuity until AV transition off the SMR network (DELWP will manage its own SMR extension as required, in discussion with EMV).
- Metropolitan Mobile Radio (MMR) Project – enhancements and modifications to current MMR capabilities and MMR terminal reconfiguration.
- Terminal Procurement and Deployment Project – procurement, configuration and rollout of new digital radio fleet for AV (vehicles, motorcycles, portable radios, air assets and fixed stations).
- ESTA Integration Project – modifications to ESTA operations (dispatch console profiles, dispatch operations processes and procedures, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) databases).
- Mobile Data Network (MDN) Project – enhancements and modifications to enable regional radio data into ESTA CAD and (subject to funding approval) the expansion of MDN capability to AV regional assets.

EMV advised that some project elements are contingent on VRN SDM review outcomes, limiting progress during 2021. In late November 2021 EMV provided a revised DRUP Stage 2 Program Management Plan reflecting these contingencies (and providing budget, scope and timeframe details) to Program Control Group members, noting that the plan incorporated AV and DELWP input and further ESTA input was required.

On 31 March 2022 EMV provided the DRUP Stage 2 Steering Committee with updates on each project and a schedule outlining the key deliverables for each project to mid-2025.

Progress highlights during 2021, as reported to the Steering Committee, include completion of the first two RMR project stages:

- an assessment of RMR capacity in light of AV's and DELWP's planned transition onto the network
- documentation of AV's and DELWP's technical and service coverage requirements ahead of their planned transition.

EMV has provided IGEM with documentation of its incorporation of AV, DELWP and ESTA feedback on RMR contract amendments to address these requirements and other improvements, in preparation for negotiation of amendments with the network vendor later in 2022.

Public Safety Mobile Broadband

PSMB aims to improve the services delivered by Australia's public safety agencies and enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness by transitioning communications to mobile broadband-based applications and technologies.

In December 2018 the Council of Australian Governments²¹ approved a strategic roadmap for the implementation of a national PSMB capability and in July 2020 Victoria confirmed its commitment to the delivery of the PSMB program.

Emergency Management Australia (EMA) – a group within the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs – is responsible for PSMB program delivery, including work to establish a PSMB national project management office and update the strategic roadmap in consultation with jurisdictions. EMV meets regularly with the NSW Telco Authority team responsible for delivery of the PSMB proof of concept (PoC) trials on behalf of participating jurisdictions.

In early July 2021 a memorandum of understanding outlining agreed funding arrangements for the PoC trials and the national project management office was executed between the NSW Telco Authority, EMA, and participating jurisdictions including Victoria.

On 21 December 2021 EMV reported to the ESTA Service Performance and Commercial Committee that Phase 1 of the PoC trial concluded in December 2021 and that Phase 2 was due for completion in May 2022. EMV also reported that the Australian Government had auctioned the preferred PSMB spectrum to the market, with potential adverse impacts on PSMB's establishment. In light of the unavailability of the preferred spectrum, in early 2022 EMA planned to review the target operating model and undertake an analysis of alternative spectrums.

Victorian Radio Network Service Delivery Model Review

On 22 February 2021 EMV informed participating agencies of the commencement of the VRN SDM Review, which aims to:

- determine the preferred service delivery model in relation to various state operational communications contracts²² beyond 2025–26
- identify the preferred procurement approach (including implementation strategy and timeframes to implement outcomes from the review)
- identify the implications for existing state contracts including existing contractual provisions, scope of services, asset investment and tenure.

A dedicated working group was established for regular agency consultation on the review, including representatives from AV, CFA, DELWP, DJPR, EMV, ESTA, FRV, LSV, VICSES and VicPol. EMV chaired the first working group meeting on 27 May 2021, followed by workshops in June 2021 to obtain feedback on current VRN SDM arrangements and one-on-one workshops with agencies to identify requirements beyond 2025.

IGEM has sighted EMV presentation slides which indicate that EMV validated the requirements and their implications for VRN SDM options with agencies in late 2021. After further analysis and assessment involving agencies, in March 2022 EMV sought agency input on a proposed preferred VRN SDM option. EMV advised that it is currently assessing viable VRN SDM options in light of the agency responses prior to presenting a case to the EMV Chief Executive for decision later in 2022.

EMV advised that the review outcomes will also inform the development of a sector-wide Emergency Management Information and Communications Technology Strategy scheduled for completion in January 2023.

EMOC Program Benefits Review

An EMOC Program Benefits Review originally planned for completion in 2020 has again been deferred, most recently to enable the VRN SDM Review to proceed. The review will aim to identify the extent of achievement (or non-achievement) of expected benefits of the program to date and identify and consider any gaps, lessons learned, and opportunities for future planning.

On 13 April 2021 EMV sought ESLG endorsement to use \$1.3 million from the EMOC Program Trust to support completion of the EMOC Program Benefits Review and VRN SDM Review.

²¹ The Council of Australian Governments was replaced by the National Federation Reform Council on 29 May 2020.

²² These include the Metropolitan Mobile Radio Services Agreement, RMR Contract, Mobile Data Network Project Services Agreement, and the Managed Device Services Agreement.

Given the EMOC Program is reaching its delivery mid-point, IGEM encourages EMV to expedite progression of the review in 2022–23 to help clarify future needs and address gaps in the program going forward.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

ACTION 4.6 - EM-COP THREE YEAR PLAN

Develop and implement a three-year plan to strengthen Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EMCOP), including improving the interoperability, use, access and consolidation of emergency management information systems and data. The plan should also include the delivery of common principles, standards, definition, systems of work and the agreements required to define the responsibilities for the delivery of data sets.

Commencement	2015–16 Q1
Planned completion	2020 (completion date currently being revised)
Lead agency	EMV
Status	In progress (overdue)

Launched in 2016, Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EM-COP) is an online communication, planning and collaboration tool that enables emergency management personnel to quickly share information and make strategic decisions. EM-COP provides access to real-time information and is used at local, regional, and state levels to support intelligence gathering activities and the delivery of public information and warnings during emergencies.

Action 4.6 was originally due for completion in Q4 of 2018–19 but was placed on hold in late 2017 due to funding and resourcing issues and remained on hold throughout 2018 and 2019.

The 2020–21 Victorian State Budget committed \$4 million funding for the maintenance and upgrade of EM-COP and the VicEmergency information and warnings platform.

In November 2021 the Department of Justice and Community Safety approved additional resourcing for EMV's Emergency Management Technology branch, which supports communications to the community, operational communications, and critical information services for the emergency management sector (refer to Action 4.5).

On 29 June 2021 EMV reported to the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority Service Performance and Commercial Committee that a business case for an EM-COP and VicEmergency Upgrade had been approved.

As of February 2022, EMV planned to complete an EM-COP upgrade between June 2022 and June 2023, with the scope to be confirmed.

EMV advised that a revised planned completion date for this action has yet to be confirmed.

Finding

IGEM notes that this action is in the early stages of development and that this action is overdue.

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