

Emergency Management Planning Reform

Assurance of emergency management plans

The *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (EMLA Act) was passed through Parliament in August 2018, and seeks to establish an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated framework for emergency management planning.

Plan assurance

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) has developed a new assurance framework for emergency management plans prepared at state, regional and municipal levels under the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (the Act), as amended by the EMLA Act.

The new assurance framework provides a combination of oversight and assurance measures to promote consistent, comprehensive and effective planning at all levels. This framework will assure the newly created plans at the regional level and will replace the current Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) audit process at the municipal level from 1 December 2020.

What will change?

Currently, VICSES is responsible for auditing municipal emergency management plans (MEMPs) on a three-year schedule in accordance with the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005*. Following the commencement of new emergency management planning arrangements for the municipal level on 1 December 2020, VICSES's role in MEMP audits will be repealed and replaced with new assurance requirements that apply at all three planning levels (state, regional and municipal).

These new requirements represent a shift to new assurance approach, where relevant preparers are responsible for ensuring that their plan complies with the new planning framework. This will occur under the general oversight of the planning level above.



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Statement of Assurance (SoA)

The new arrangements require that each emergency management plan is submitted for approval alongside a Statement of Assurance (SoA). The SoA verifies that the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Act and with due regard to Ministerial guidelines for preparing emergency management plans.

The SoA consists of:

- an assurance checklist, to ensure all requirements from the Act have been met
- a certificate of assurance, signed by the preparer to confirm that the plan is compliant with the Act.

The Act requires that a SoA must:

- state the extent to which the emergency management plan was prepared in accordance with the Act
- be prepared with regard to any guidelines issued under Section 77 of the Act
- in the case of an updated emergency management plan, list the date on which the plan was last reviewed.

Process for assuring an emergency management plan

The new assurance framework will be structured in four parts:

1. Development and sign-off of the emergency management plan.
2. Completion of the SoA (checklist and certificate).
3. Submission of the plan and SoA, including a presentation to the relevant approver.
4. Publication of the approved plan.

For more detail on the above process, visit the [Resource Library](#) on the EMV website.

System-level assurance

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) will provide system-level assurance of the new planning framework as part of its broader assurance functions. The IGEM has indicated that consultation will occur on a system-level assurance framework in mid-2020.

Liability

A committee member will not be held personally liable for acts or omissions conducted in the course of their work on a REMPC or MEMPC where their actions or omissions were made in good faith and in accordance with their duties pursuant to the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.

Timing and deliverables:

- The roll out of the new arrangements is beginning first at the state level, and then at regional and municipal levels.
- The legislation will take effect in full on 1 December 2020. Once all three levels are in place, the arrangements promote a top-down and bottom-up approach so that information can be shared at all levels.
- The municipal planning and audit process should continue as normal until the municipal phase of the EMLA Act commences. EMV will work with VICSES to transition from the current audit requirements to the new assurance framework.

Further work is underway to make the assurance framework more outcomes-driven.