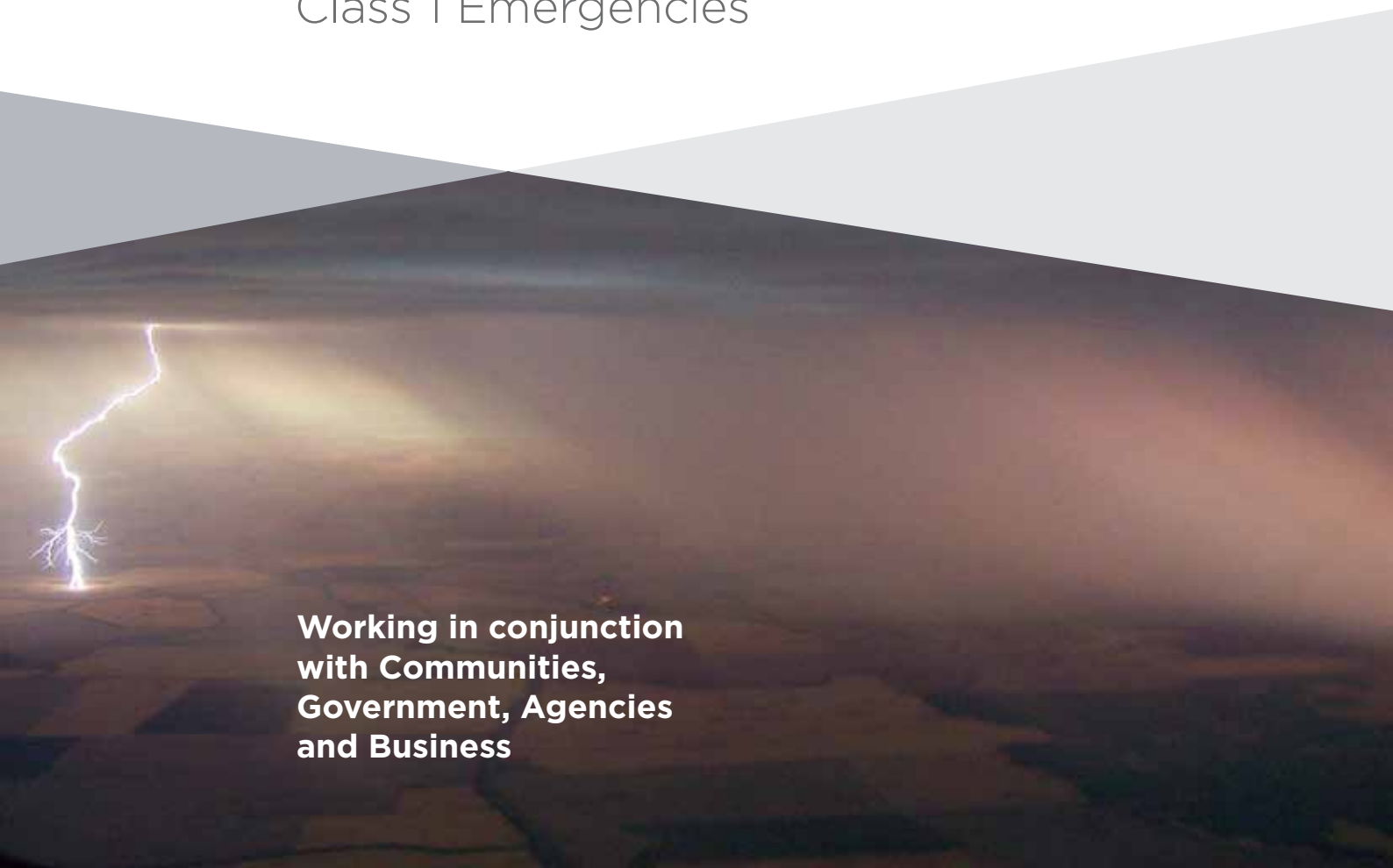
EMV
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
VICTORIA

Foundations of Emergency Management

Class 1 Emergencies



Working in conjunction with Communities, Government, Agencies and Business

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1 Foreword

Victoria has traditionally approached emergency management through individual agencies preparing for and responding to specific types of hazards, such as fire or flood.

However, projections for the future indicate that demographic and economic change, a variable climate, changing land use and tighter public fiscal conditions will all challenge the capability and capacity of the traditional emergency services.

The experiences of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and the 2010–2011 floods revealed the need for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to emergency management in order to reduce the impact of future major events on the community, infrastructure, natural and agricultural environment, and the economy.

Staff and volunteers from Victoria's responder agencies have achieved a great level of change over recent years, contributing to the state's emergency services becoming more integrated, interoperable and community focused.

However, further change and ongoing reform is required to ensure the State has effective, accountable and sustainable emergency management arrangements into the future. The introduction of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and the establishment of the Emergency Management Commissioner is a major step towards creating a more unified approach to emergency management in Victoria.

Contemporary emergency services agencies now collaborate with a much wider range of government, non-government agencies, businesses and communities to form an integrated, cohesive team. Together this team will plan and deliver seamless emergency management services to help the community build capacity and resilience to withstand, respond and recover from emergencies.

These Foundations of Emergency Management (Class1 emergencies) is the first step in collectively documenting who the responder agencies are, what they do and the services they deliver in working towards achieving the state's vision of 'safer and more resilient communities'.

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2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose and scope

This document outlines the foundational concepts of operation for emergency related activities of the responder agencies and Emergency Management Victoria (EMV).

The responder agencies are:

- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB)
- Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)

Activities of the responder agencies encompass the response to hazards which include fire, flood, storm, hazardous materials, tsunami and earthquake; and the tasks of road rescue, marine rescue, and other specialist rescue. These activities span the scale of emergencies from routine response through to major emergencies. Major emergencies for the responder agencies form what is defined in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* as 'Class 1 emergencies'.

The foundational concepts of operation outlined in this document will inform the content of all subordinate operational doctrine relating to the management of these emergencies, including documentation relating to training and activities undertaken before, during and after these emergencies.

Personnel from all levels within the agencies are the primary audience for this document. The document will also be of interest to government, other agencies and the community.

The document outlines the new state approach to the management of emergencies, as a key component of emergency management reform. The intent is for the agencies to work with a broader range of government, non-government organisations, business and the community to form an integrated, cohesive team that will deliver effective, efficient and united services to support the community to build capacity and strengthen their resilience to withstand, respond and recover from emergencies.

2.2 Common doctrine

Common doctrine for responder agencies provides a platform for working together through a unified understanding of roles and responsibilities, an integrated knowledge base for making decisions, and consistent standards against which performance can be measured.

This document sits at the capstone layer within the responder agency hierarchy of doctrine. It informs and guides the development, content and direction of complimentary and subordinate doctrine in accordance with the common doctrine hierarchy.

CFA
FIRE
VFB
SCANIA
POLICE

2.3 The state vision

The Victorian community has always faced 'emergency' events that disrupt their lives and potentially lead to longer-term consequences. Climate science research and changes to human population size and distribution suggests the consequences of emergencies will increase over time.

The Victorian Government aims to achieve an effective, efficient and sustainable emergency management system that minimises the likelihood and consequences of emergencies on the community. The state's vision is for the emergency management sector to achieve 'safer and more resilient communities'.

To achieve this vision, the Victorian Government has embarked on a series of reforms that places a greater emphasis on:

- support for the community to build resilience
- mitigating hazards
- flexible emergency management arrangements
- improved coordination and cooperation across agencies.

The concept of shared responsibility and greater collaboration between the agencies, the community, business, industry and state and local government underpins these reforms.

The introduction of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* was the first stage of implementing these reforms. The *Emergency Management Act 2013* clarifies emergency management responsibilities and establishes the Emergency Management Commissioner as the person accountable for ensuring the readiness for, response to, consequence management of and recovery from emergencies in Victoria is systematic and coordinated.

Three key principles support the vision:

Community
Emergency management founded on community participation, resilience and shared responsibility.

Collaboration
Efficient governance arrangements that clarify roles and responsibilities, embed cooperation across agencies, and ensure emergency management reform is coordinated across the sector.

Capability
An all-hazards, all-agencies approach built on networked arrangements, greater interoperability and a stronger emphasis on risk mitigation and management of consequences.

3 The agencies

3.1 Our history

Natural emergencies have largely driven the evolution of the emergency services in Victoria, with bushfire, hazardous materials and flood events defining the state arrangements.

During the 1800s, volunteer fire brigades formed across the state including in major towns and the growing city and suburbs of Melbourne.

A spate of major city fires in the late 1880s led to the *Fire Brigades Act 1890*, which established the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board with responsibility for fire brigades based within 16 kilometres of Melbourne and the Country Fire Brigade Board responsibility for fire brigades beyond that area.

The State Forests Department (the predecessor of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) was established in *Forests Act 1907* and was given responsibility for regulation of fires within forest areas of the state. This responsibility was assumed by the Forests Commission in 1918.

Following the disastrous 1939 Black Friday bushfires and the subsequent Royal Commission in to these fires, the government in 1945 allocated the additional responsibility for fire suppression on public land to the Forests Commission and formed the Country Fire Authority.

In 1950, the government created the Victoria Civil Defence Organisation (the forerunner to the Victoria State Emergency Service) to act as a volunteer based civil defence organisation to assist in the event of war. Following major fires in 1962, the role of the Civil Defence Organisation was broadened in the 1968 release of the State Disaster Plan, to include response to natural and peacetime disasters.

In 1972 the *State Emergency Services and Civil Defence Act* legislated the role of the Civil Defence Organisation, which was renamed the Victoria State Emergency Service in 1975 to conform with other states. In 1981 the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act* was passed recognising VICSES as a general emergency management agency. In 2005 VICSES was established as a statutory authority, accountable to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Following the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires and subsequent inquiry into the fires led by the then Chief Commissioner of Police S.I. 'Mick' Miller, government introduced the *Emergency Management Act 1986* to redefine emergency management arrangements and to give greater responsibility to individual municipalities, fire and emergency services.

In 2000 the amendments to the *Emergency Management Act 1986* created the position and functions of the Emergency Services Commissioner to advise and report to the Minister for Emergency Services on any issues relating to emergency management, establish standards for emergency management and monitor and assess performance against such standards. The Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner assumed

the role of central policy office for emergency management, to support the statutory duties of the Emergency Services Commissioner, the Minister as Coordinator in Chief of Emergency Management.

The Black Saturday bushfires of February 2009 were the worst in Australia's history in terms of lives lost. The recommendations of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission led to further developments in the State's emergency management arrangements. The *Fire Services Commissioner Act 2010* established the Fire Services Commissioner as an independent statutory officer appointed to oversee and work with Victoria's fire services to achieve continuous improvement and reform, and to act as the single 'State Controller' for major fires in Victoria.

In 2010 and 2011 some of the worst flooding ever seen on record saw about 30 percent of the state impacted, encompassing 70 of the 79 local government areas. This resulted in a government Review of the Flood Warnings and Response, led by Neil Comrie. This review provided the opportunity to examine the emergency management arrangements in Victoria in the context of the 2010–2011 floods, and provided the opportunity to revisit the findings and recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. This led to the publication of the government's *Victorian Emergency Management Reform (white) Paper* which provided the 'road map' for emergency management reform over the next ten years to develop safer and more resilient communities.

The *Emergency Management Act 2013* constructs the governance and leadership for Victoria to deliver seamless, efficient and effective emergency management services for the benefit of the community, through the establishment of a number of new entities:

- The State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC), to act as the peak, whole of Victorian government advisory body to the Minister for Emergency Services in relation to emergency management policy and strategy. The membership of SCRC includes the head of each government department, Chief Commissioner of Police, Emergency Management Victoria Chief Executive, Emergency Management Commissioner, Inspector-General for Emergency Management and Municipal Association of Victoria Chief Executive Officer.
- Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) as the central body to support the implementation of the government's emergency management reform agenda. EMV is the central hub of a coordinated and integrated emergency management network. Two appointments head EMV: the Emergency Management Commissioner and the EMV Chief Executive.
- The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) to provide assurance to the community and government regarding the capability, capacity and performance of the emergency management arrangements and to foster continuous improvement across the emergency management sector.

3.2 What we do

The responsibility for planning, preventing and preparing for emergencies rests with all Victorians.

Individual community members have a responsibility to learn about the risks within their environment and decide on how they will act in the event an emergency occurs.

The state has a duty to plan, prepare for, mitigate, respond to and support recovery from emergencies. Across a wide range of government portfolios, the state develops legislation, and plans and implements risk reduction programs. However, regardless of effort, the state cannot absolutely guarantee the safety of the community during an emergency.

When requested, as part of the Victorian public sector, the agencies support other Victorian, interstate and international agencies in the response to and recovery from a much wider range of emergencies both in Victoria, interstate and overseas.

The state's emergency management network undertakes a range of activities before, during and after an emergency.

The *Emergency Management Act 2013* repealed the *Fire Services Commissioner Act 2010* and parts of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, setting the legislative arrangements for the future of emergency management in Victoria. Further legislative reforms will eventually see the *Emergency Management Act 2013* fully supersede the *Emergency Management Act 1986.*

Before

Agencies work in partnership with communities and a wide range of government, business and non-government organisations to build resilience within communities. The aim is for communities to exercise greater autonomy in planning, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies. The agencies inform, educate, involve and support communities in the resolution of specific policy areas or issues. They also manage prevention programs aimed at reducing the instance, severity or consequences of emergencies. The work undertaken with the community prior to the emergency can greatly reduce this impact.

During

The agencies respond to a range of emergencies including fire, flood, storm, hazardous materials, tsunami and earthquake; and undertake the tasks of road rescue, marine rescue, and other specialist rescue. The responder agencies support each other and receive support from a wide range of other departments and organisations during these emergencies, with the aim of reducing the impact on people, infrastructure, natural and agricultural environments and the economy, in accordance with the state emergency management strategic priorities.

After

While the agencies do not lead the recovery from emergencies, they provide support to the recovery agencies in order to ensure the community receives continuity of support and services through the transition from response to recovery. There are also aspects of recovery where the agencies hold specific responsibility or expertise and can contribute to the overall recovery effort, for example the restoration of public land and community engagement.

MFB

4 How we deliver our services

Emergency management in Victoria embraces the whole of government and whole of community approach. Emergencies touch people's life experiences in many different ways, therefore the services that support the community needs to be flexible.

There is no single agency or organisation with the capacity to take sole responsibility for all aspects of managing an emergency. Victorian emergency management arrangements involve the resources of many agencies and individuals, in an integrated network, working to prevent, mitigate, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Victoria's emergency management arrangements are:

- designed to deal with all hazards
- integrated (involve all people and relevant agencies)
- comprehensive (cover prevention, response and recovery).

The state empowers the agencies to work towards achieving the vision of 'safer and more resilient communities' through the following concepts:

- All Victorians share the responsibility for planning for, mitigating, responding to and recovering from major emergencies.
- The agencies work with the Victorian community, government and business as one integrated and unified team before, during and after emergencies.
- The protection and preservation of human life, which includes the lives of both agency personnel and the community, takes priority over all other considerations.
- The primary goal of all emergency management activities is to reduce the consequences of emergency events on the community and to its community values.
- Agency personnel need to be flexible, work in a spirit of collegiate goodwill and understand the key principles that underpin an effective emergency management operation in order to be fully effective in all circumstances.
- The state must ensure the community receives value for its investment through delivering an effective and efficient emergency management system.
- Learning from emergency events and embracing innovation is essential for the state to maintain best practice emergency management systems, processes and continual improvement.

Home
Emergency
Plan

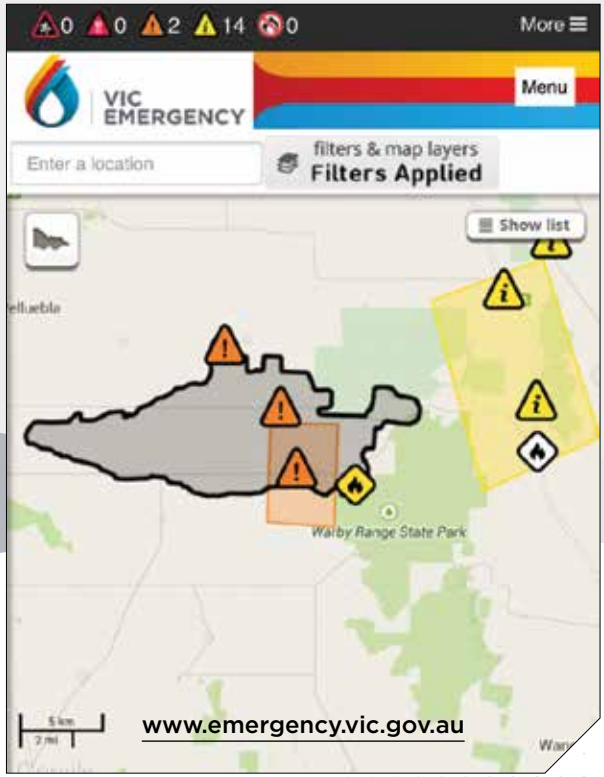
5 Future direction

The agencies operate in a worldwide sphere of social, economic and environmental change. Projections indicate Victoria is likely to experience a growth in population, a variable climate, changing land use and different economic and social drivers.

Climate science suggests there will be a greater incidence of heatwave, bushfire, flood and windstorm. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather is likely to affect the number and intensity of natural emergencies while other environmental, social and economic factors are also likely to drive new and different hazards, such as outbreaks of disease or agricultural disasters.

Additionally, both the public and private sectors in Australia are experiencing a sustained tightening of their fiscal environments. Along with all other sectors, the agencies need to explore the options for improving their efficiency and effectiveness.

To meet the emergency management needs of the future, the state has embarked on a program to reform the emergency management system. The introduction of the *Emergency Management Act 2013* and the establishment of Emergency Management Victoria are the first key steps of this reform.



Investment in emergency management planning, systems, communications and training will increasingly encompass an all-hazards all-agencies approach. Under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, the State Crisis and Resilience Council is responsible for developing a three-year rolling Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan. The plan will drive the Victorian Government's emergency management reform agenda, set priorities, and assist in determining investment decisions.

The three-year rolling plan will maintain a strategic focus on strengthening Victoria's emergency management capability coordinated through the three SCRC subcommittees: Risk and Resilience; Capability and Response; Relief and Recovery, under the following themes:

- communities and business
- people and culture
- governance
- services and systems.

The work of the sub-committees, in particular the Capability and Response sub-committee will contribute to how Victoria's responder agencies train together, work to common operating standards, share the same operational picture, and use equipment and systems that work together.

The agencies will continue to work towards reducing the impact of major emergencies on people, infrastructure, natural and agricultural environments, and the economy in accordance with government expectation. The state will build on the strengths of the individual agencies through enhancing their working relationship, without compromising their individual identities and expertise.

To achieve the necessary reform and change, a different approach is required. This difference lies in the traditional emergency services collaborating with a much wider range of agencies with a role in emergency management, to form an integrated, cohesive team. Together they will plan and deliver seamless emergency management services, in a partnership approach with government, business and communities, to help the state build capacity and resilience to withstand, respond and recover from emergencies.

6 We work as one

Hazards are an enduring feature of the Victorian environment and the state will continue to be faced with these challenges into the future. Government and agencies will need to work together cooperatively to enable flexible and networked responses that better support businesses and the community, and place greater emphasis on reducing the impact of hazards and building community resilience.

Victorians deserve an emergency management system that can readily and effectively utilise the skills, expertise and commitment of our volunteers and paid personnel to the greatest extent, harnessing the full individual and collective capacity of the responder agencies.

The state's emergency management arrangements are being reformed to better serve all Victorians. Reform is a long-term process that will require a shift in thinking and an ongoing commitment from the government, agencies, business and the Victorian community.

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