

SAFER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT IN VICTORIA 2022–28



Authorised by the Victorian Government
1 Treasury Place, Melbourne, 3002

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ISBN 978-1-922262-85-1 (PDF/online/MS word)

Published month: July 2022

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format please email media@emv.vic.gov.au

This document is also available in Word and PDF format at emv.vic.gov.au

Acknowledgement to Country

The Victorian Government acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land. The Victorian Government also acknowledges and pays respect to the Elders, past and present.



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* This section provides an overview of the purpose of the Strategic Action Plan and a link to the current plan, which is a separate document.

Foreword



FROM THE MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Roadmap 2022–28 provides the forward path to help us achieve our shared vision of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.

The Roadmap will be critical as we continue to reform Victoria's emergency management sector to meet the challenges of the future. It builds on the progress achieved through the sector in the past 10 years and outlines some of the challenges we must continue to address. It provides for a stronger understanding of the priorities and the actions that will be essential to improving community safety and resilience. It also identifies improved and sustainable outcomes to guide the sector into the future.

To achieve our shared vision, I recognise the importance of the sector, community and businesses continuing to work collaboratively to develop adaptive and agile strategies for emergency management. Our expertise, efforts and resources need to converge to lead the required reform to deliver the best outcomes for the community. Working as one to achieve our vision will also require strong, united leadership, underpinned by shared values and positive behaviours.

By working together to drive sector reform, we can strive to do more to keep our communities safe and achieve our shared vision of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.



The Hon. Jaclyn Symes
Minister for Emergency Services



FROM THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMISSIONER

Since 2019, Victoria has endured some of the most significant emergencies in living memory, from devastating bushfires and storms to the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, Victorians and our emergency management personnel have worked to meet these challenges with dedication, resilience and a strong commitment to community.

As we move into a more volatile future for emergencies, now is the time to collectively set our strategic direction. The Strategic Roadmap for Emergency Management in Victoria (the Roadmap) provides a reflection on emergency management experiences in Victoria over the last decade. It charts a path forward to ensure our sector and the Victorian community is well equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The Strategic Roadmap will be key to the success of preparing for, responding to, and recovering from major emergencies in Victoria. It will steer the vision, priorities, investment and actions for the Victorian Government and the emergency management sector. It is an overarching strategy to guide emergency reform and give the community confidence that progress is being made.

The next decade will pose significant challenges and opportunities for emergency management in Victoria, including from the effects of climate change. The Strategic Roadmap empowers the sector to tackle these challenges and drive initiatives to strengthen our collective capacity, capability, governance, leadership and systems to support these efforts.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone involved in developing, collaborating, and delivering the Roadmap. It represents a superb collective effort across the sector. By continuing to work as one, we can facilitate sustainable change to achieve our shared vision of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.

Andrew Crisp OAM
Emergency Management Commissioner

Purpose of our Strategic Roadmap



Over the past four years, Victorians have faced a range of emergencies including bushfires, storms, floods, an earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic. Victorians responded with exceptional resilience, supported by a dedicated and highly skilled emergency management sector.

We have learnt a lot but it is clear that the future will bring significant challenges as we face new, more frequent and severe emergencies driven by climate change and other causes. Protecting this state will require new ways of working and a cleverly planned, more collective approach to emergency management.

This Roadmap sets out the shared vision, priorities and actions that will guide our emergency management sector for the next six years. It explains our vision for a future with *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.

The Roadmap describes our *journey* as a sector in the 10 years following the 2009 Victorian bushfires – what we have experienced and learned.

It identifies the *challenges* Victorians and the emergency management sector will face in the future, including more frequent and severe emergencies driven by climate change.

It offers *outcomes* to build a shared understanding of what is important and help us better understand how we perform as a sector.

It sets out *priorities* to focus the collective efforts of government, communities, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and individuals.

It details the *actions* we will take to prepare for, respond to and help Victorians recover from emergency events.

Emergency Management Victoria has consulted with a wide range of departments, agencies and organisations to create this Roadmap. This Roadmap is the *collective voice of Victoria's emergency management sector* from our first responders to our cyber security personnel, to our relief and recovery teams. Together we have identified where we can deliver the greatest value, be most effective and efficient, and create the change we want to see.

This Roadmap is our guide to *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.



Approach to strategic reform

Victoria is embarking on strategic reforms to its emergency management arrangements that are designed to make sure we, as a sector, achieve community focused outcomes.

These changes are being driven by improvements suggested in reviews and inquiries and a focus on learning and improvement within the emergency management sector.

In October 2021, the Victorian Government¹ committed to developing a Sector Outcomes Framework, to measure the sector's effectiveness in supporting resilient communities and providing reliable, integrated and timely services.

In conjunction, this commitment included developing a roadmap as to how the sector would implement its strategic reform over the coming decade.

The Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Framework (the Framework) and the Strategic Roadmap for Emergency Management in Victoria (the Roadmap) have been prepared in line with the Victorian government outcomes approach and architecture. Figure 1 demonstrates the interconnections between the Framework and the Roadmap, which includes the Strategic Action Plan, in accordance with the Victorian outcomes architecture.

Figure 1: Alignment between the Framework and the Roadmap with the Victorian outcomes architecture, as detailed in Outcomes Reform In Victoria.



1. Victorian Government Response to the Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector and Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season: Phase 1 report (October 2020).



SECTOR OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Victoria's Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Framework (the Framework) is a companion document to the Strategic Roadmap.

The Framework sets out our shared vision of success for emergency management in Victoria. It translates the vision statement *Safer and More Resilient Communities* into a clear set of outcomes so we can monitor and report on our collective efforts. The Framework will allow us to understand what's working and what's not; so we can adapt, improve and continue to prioritise our investment and resources where they're needed most.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC ROADMAP

The Framework's outcomes say where we want to get to and form the basis of our Roadmap's priorities (refer p 14). The Roadmap's priorities explain how we will focus our attention to achieve the outcomes. Together, they create a pathway for us to meet future challenges and achieve what we need to.

The priorities give government, communities and businesses a focus for our collective effort and are supported by strategic actions. The actions explain what government will do and are set out in the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (SAP).

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The SAP is a three-year rolling plan required under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*. It is developed by the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) which provides emergency management policy and strategy advice to the Victorian Government. It will be updated each year and help us navigate the emergency management sector's emerging challenges and opportunities.



Key terms

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Capability	Our collective ability to reduce the likelihood and consequences of an emergency.
Capacity	The extent to which the core elements of capability (people, resources, governance, systems and processes) can be sustained before, during and after an emergency.
Community	Groups of people in Victoria united by their geographical location, social networks, cultural heritage or common interests. People can belong to more than one community and they can be virtual.
Consequence management	The coordination of agencies to minimise the adverse effects of emergencies on people, communities, infrastructure and the environment. Safety considerations are paramount and if the emergency is due to a hijack, siege, riot, warlike act or act of terrorism, the exercise of police powers must not be interfered with. Consequence management informs strategic decision making before, during and after emergencies and is important for longer-term decision making after a major emergency. It also supports community recovery.
Emergency	An event that is happening in Victoria, or about to, that could damage, endanger or threaten life, property or the environment. This includes earthquake, flood, wind storm, fire, explosion, road accident, plague, contamination, warlike act, terrorism, riot, or disruption to an essential service.
Emergency management	The arrangements, knowledge, measures and practices needed to mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergencies.
Emergency management sector	All the agencies, departments and other organisations or people who have a responsibility, function or other role in emergency management.
Recovery	Assisting individuals and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning.
Resilience	The capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses or acute shocks they experience.
Resources	The physical equipment and assets needed for emergency management activities, for example, infrastructure, fleet, IT equipment, radios, communications equipment, consumables, plant and machinery resources and personal protective clothing and equipment.
Response	Action taken immediately before, during and immediately after an emergency to reduce its effects and consequences on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs.
Workforce	Individuals (career or volunteer) who deliver emergency management functions in Victoria, covering mitigation, preparedness, response and/or recovery.

Where we've come from



VICTORIA'S APPROACH TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IS SHAPED BY LIVED EXPERIENCES

The 2009 Victorian bushfires were one of the most devastating disasters in Australia's history. Over 173 people lost their lives, 414 were injured, 430,000 hectares were affected and more than a million wild and domesticated animals died. Less than two years later in 2010–11, widespread flooding inundated almost 20 per cent of the state, affecting more than 100 towns. These two events led to the most significant period of emergency management reform in Victoria's history.

Recommendations from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission and the 2010–11 Comrie Flood Review informed a new governance framework for managing emergencies under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*. We:

- ▶ created state level control arrangements for major emergencies including the State Emergency Response Plan and State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan so everyone's roles and responsibilities were understood
- ▶ created Emergency Management Victoria and a new role 'Inspector-General for Emergency Management' (IGEM) to strengthen coordination and improve accountability and assurance.

We also changed our approach and outlook to share responsibility. It was clear no single actor could be responsible for keeping all Victorians safe – government, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and members of the community all have a role to play. We invested in partnerships with Commonwealth, state and territory counterparts under the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, developed the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy with industry, and partnered with local governments to strengthen community capability and capacity.

These reforms gave Victoria a new model for emergency management and it was soon put to the test. In 2014, Hazelwood was blanketed in smoke for over a month, while in 2016 an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event put record pressure on the health system. Improved communication before, during and after these emergencies better placed Victorians to make informed decisions and take action.

Fires in Wye River and Scotsburn in 2015 shed light on the importance of local partnerships and adapting our recovery approaches to respond to local strengths, needs and priorities. They also highlighted the need for consistency and equity in our services.

New and unexpected emergencies followed. In the period 2017 to 2019, major industrial fires in the Melbourne suburbs of Coolaroo, West Footscray and Campbellfield taught us more. We needed to work with regulators and essential services to better understand risk and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our communities and our emergency service personnel. Vehicle attacks in Bourke Street and Flinders Street in 2017, followed by a fatal terrorist attack in 2018, made us rethink safety in places of mass gathering and the impact of collective trauma beyond geographical boundaries.

Our approach to relief and recovery, including our partnerships, shifted over time to reflect the breadth and complexity of these emergencies, as we learnt from communities about how we can best support them. We understand that community connection and resilience before an emergency has a strong influence on how communities adapt and recover after an emergency.

We have continued to learn and listen. We have changed how we work, how we prepare, and how we respond. We know that everyone must rise to the challenge of keeping Victorians safe in an ever-changing world. Together.



THE LAST THREE YEARS HAVE BEEN CHALLENGING AND UNPRECEDENTED

In 2019–20 there were fires along the length of Australia's east coast, starting earlier and extending late into the fire season. People across the world were stunned by the destruction. It was the country's hottest and driest year ever. For months, we were shrouded in smoke, so thick it was visible from space. In Victoria 1.5 million+ hectares burned, five people died and over 400 homes were destroyed. Our emergency services personal faced these unprecedented challenges with courage and tenacity. They worked together across all parts of Australia to keep people safe and help us get through the season even when on some days, extreme conditions drove fire behaviour that was impossible to control.

The fires were soon followed by the largest pandemic in living memory – COVID-19. It seemed to change the way the world worked. While the dedication, tenacity and self-sacrifice of our doctors, nurses and all health professionals saved many lives, the pandemic placed real pressure on our emergency management system, stretching its workforce, systems and processes. Even though we pulled together to address this crisis, the independent Hotel Quarantine Inquiry highlighted that more could be done to strengthen our governance arrangements and ensure decisions were being made at the right levels, with the right information.

The difficulties of the last three years, combined with insights from Royal Commissions and Government Inquiries into the emergency management sector, show there is more we need to do. To meet future challenges, we need to build our capability, strengthen workforce sustainability and ensure governance arrangements are clear, effective and well exercised.

The Victorian Government is already delivering many necessary changes in its response to the IGEM's *Review of 10 years of reform of the emergency management sector and Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season*. We're also implementing lessons from the 2021 June storm and flood event.

Through this Roadmap, we will build on this work to make sure we're ready for our next emergency, not just our last. We know that the heart of our system – our 'all communities, all emergencies' approach defined in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* means that no matter what type of emergency we face, our arrangements should be integrated and coordinated.

Working as one, every time, we can help Victorians get back on their feet; learning, adapting, and always advancing our vision of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.

What lies ahead



THE FUTURE REQUIRES A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Climate change is increasing the severity, frequency and duration of natural disasters in Victoria

Fire seasons are getting longer and starting earlier, heat waves are becoming more frequent and storm intensity is increasing flood risk. Sea levels are rising, causing erosion and flooding in low lying coastal and tidal areas. Annual rainfall is predicted to decline across Victoria, but when extreme rainfall events occur, they are likely to be more intense. Climate change is also driving the spread of invasive pests and diseases, threatening the resilience of our agriculture sector, food security, community health and ecosystems.

Collectively, this will place growing pressure on the sector's resources. Agencies are tested by concurrent and compounding emergencies, increasingly beyond the scale of what local communities can manage. Damaged infrastructure may interrupt critical service delivery at the same time as help is needed in more places. We need to ensure we are supporting communities to adapt to climate change impacts and rethinking how we approach recovery after an emergency event. Community resilience will be critical as people and assets are stretched.

Technology is changing emergency risk profiles

Information and communications technology offers incredible benefits – enabling us to connect with others in new ways, process vast amounts of information and learn things from all over the world. We can reach more people with real time information about emergency risks and events, reimagine how we navigate complex data systems with machine learning and reduce our carbon footprint through low emissions vehicles.

Despite these benefits, technology also presents challenges and costs. Critical and personal communications infrastructure is vulnerable to threats we have little direct control over and requires expensive upgrades, interoperability and training. Cyber-attacks, hackers and malware are an everyday risk – undealt with, the technology that keeps us connected can cause harm, leaving us isolated and vulnerable.

More Victorians are changing how and where they work

Under the restrictions of COVID-19, we quickly adapted to a life of working remotely, and many have now jumped on the opportunity to move out of urban centres to regional areas and the peri-urban fringe. Mobility has never been higher and traditional place-based communities are changing. In this new world it will be important to make sure that no matter where they are, Victorians can access the information they need to stay safe.

As the demographics of Victoria's population continue to change, our emergency management sector will face new opportunities and challenges

We'll need to attract new volunteers to balance an aging emergency service workforce and more strongly engage with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. There will be opportunities to rethink how we work with spontaneous volunteers and informal organisations and businesses and tap into traditionally underrepresented cohorts to better recognise skills and reduce practical and financial barriers.

We recognise First Nations peoples' connections with and knowledge of Victoria's lands and waters, and that as a result, First Nations peoples are impacted significantly by natural disasters. We are committed to supporting Aboriginal self-determination, including working with Victoria's Traditional Owners to protect and restore Country.

Our future will bring new and novel emergencies, some outside our scope to manage or mitigate in Victoria alone. Interdependent global supply chains, trade and international travel all pose challenges for continuity of essential services, the management of human, animal and plant disease, and the potential for outbreaks.

This is the future we face and to meet the challenges it will present, we'll need to work together. *Our commitment to you* demonstrates how we will work together so we can all build a future of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Strengthening Emergency Management in Victoria by 2028

Victoria's risk profile is changing. Climate change, changing demographics, technological advances and just in time supply chains are just some of the factors that will impact the frequency, duration and impact of emergencies.

As we head towards 2028, we will need to work together to better prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies. Individuals, communities, businesses, all levels of government and the not-for-profit sector will all have a role to play.

We will work alongside experts, community, industry and all levels of government to reduce risk and minimise the impacts of emergencies on our economy, our environment, our infrastructure and our people.

We will empower you with the information and tools you need to prepare and look after yourself, your family and your community before, during and after an emergency.

We will support First Nations self-determination in the emergency management sector and in practice.

We will streamline the way you interact with different departments and layers of government, working with you to design programs that meet community needs.

We will help you and your community stay safe by investing in our emergency services, including our volunteers, and make sure they have the resources, systems and technology they need to get the job done.

We will listen and learn, providing you with meaningful opportunities to share your experiences and inform decision making and continuous improvements.

We will work with you to plan for the future so you are ready for the next emergency not just the last.



Our vision of success



Our vision for the Victorian emergency management sector is to build *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.

Safer and More Resilient Communities represents a future where our communities are best placed to make informed decisions that allow them to meet the challenges they may face.

They are communities that are healthy and knowledgeable, with the ability to assess, monitor and manage risks, while learning new skills and building on past experiences.

People have the capacity to identify problems, establish priorities and act, with the support of good infrastructure and services.

They are also flexible and resourceful with the capacity to accept uncertainty and proactively respond to change.

Building *Safer and More Resilient Communities* is an ongoing process that will help ensure the people of Victoria are ready for the future.





OUR VISION

SAFER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

REDUCING RISKS AND IMPACTS

Outcome 1

Victoria's emergency management system reduces the risk and impact of emergencies on communities and our environment

Outcome 2

Victorians are empowered to proactively manage their own emergency risks

Outcome 3

Victorians are actively involved in decisions that affect them

Outcome 4

Victoria invests in the resilience of our infrastructure

DELIVERING PEOPLE- CENTRED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Outcome 5

Self-determination of Traditional Owners and First Nations Peoples is recognised and supported

Outcome 6

Victorians can access emergency management programs and services that are person-centred, equitable and inclusive

Outcome 7

Victoria's emergency management system is timely and responsive

Outcome 8

Victorian's lived experience with emergencies and best practice inform continuous improvement

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE SECTOR

Outcome 9

Victorians are supported by a sustainable and agile workforce that represents the people it serves

Outcome 10

Victorians are supported by a workforce that is safe

Outcome 11

Victoria's arrangements are integrated, responsive and provide clear accountability

Outcome 12

Victorians are supported by a well-resourced and innovative emergency management sector



OUR PRIORITIES

Priority 1

Work with Victorians to understand and reduce the risk of emergencies

Priority 2

Strengthen our use of data, analytics and intelligence to improve decision making

Priority 3

Support communities to be prepared and recover well after emergencies

Priority 4

Build a sustainable emergency management workforce that represents the people it serves

Priority 5

Strengthen governance arrangements to improve accountability, cooperation and participation



ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR PRIORITIES

Actions to achieve our priorities are defined in the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), a three-year rolling plan to be updated annually in line with the priorities. The SAP is a requirement of the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.

Our strategic priorities



This Roadmap is a bold vision for preparing Victoria to handle emergencies into the future.

As part of our journey to success and our commitment to you, the emergency management sector has identified five strategic priorities. These priorities are not new – the emergency services sector has been investing effort in them for some time.

Now, more than ever, it is vital we have a shared understanding of what is important so we can maximise the use of our limited resources, work together and rise to the challenges that lie ahead.

The five priorities are areas where Victoria faces the most pressing challenges in emergency management and where we can deliver the greatest impact for the community over the next six years (see more detail in our Sector Outcomes Framework).

All five priorities are collectively important. We must focus on all of them to deliver on our vision of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.



REDUCING RISKS AND IMPACTS

PRIORITY ONE

Work with Victorians to understand and reduce the risk of emergencies

As we move to a more dynamic future with novel and concurrent emergencies, we must have a clear understanding of their likelihood, severity and potential consequences so we can prepare as best as possible and prioritise our collective efforts.

By investing in risk reduction, we can protect and preserve life, minimise suffering, reduce impacts and recovery costs and unlock broader economic and social benefits.

The Victorian Government will work with all levels of government and industry to strengthen sharing and disclosure of risk information and reduce barriers to mitigating risks.

We'll strengthen education and communication to ensure Victorians are well placed to act, and invest in opportunities for locally-led risk reduction efforts while acknowledging some risks are beyond the scope of individuals or communities to mitigate and manage.

We'll also strengthen climate change adaptation efforts and continue to invest in reducing the risk exposure of our state-wide infrastructure and systems.



WE WILL WORK WITH COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS TO STRENGTHEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EMERGENCY RISKS

To make informed decisions about where we invest our resources and efforts before, during and after emergencies, we need to understand the breadth of risks Victorians face now and into the future. We need a clear picture of likelihood, severity and consequences so we can make informed decisions.

The Victorian Government will strengthen investment in the tools, systems and technologies we need to better forecast, understand and communicate risk. Already, we are leading the development of a contemporary, repeatable and systemic approach to identifying and mitigating risk – integrated quantitative data and climate modelling to inform our intelligence and decision making.

We'll ensure that climate change projections are used to inform our understanding of future risk so we can better plan and adapt to ongoing climate change.

We'll also strengthen the disclosure and sharing of risk information. This means not only sharing information collected by the Victorian Government, but working closely with insurance providers, businesses and all levels of government to create a shared picture of where action is needed.

WE WILL TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE THE IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCE OF EMERGENCIES

Early investment in reducing emergency risks lessens the potential impact and cost to all Victorians. We will work with communities, business and not-for-profit organisations to minimise risk exposure and put in place appropriate mitigations to lessen impacts and consequences. With some risks beyond the ability of individuals and communities to manage, better intelligence means we can jointly prioritise our efforts.

The Victorian Government will also capitalise on, and expand, our strengths-based approach to risk reduction. This includes greater investment in our existing risk reduction activities, such as critical infrastructure investment in transport, water, energy and health; and new opportunities, informed by our strengthened understanding of emergency risks.

We will continue to advocate for Victorian interests in national disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption through forums with Commonwealth and State and Territory government stakeholders. We will build on risk mitigation investment to identify best practice and deliver quality outcomes for communities across all hazards; including bushfire risk reduction, cyber security and biosecurity.

While the Victorian Government accepts primary responsibility and accountability for emergency management, all Victorians must take a proactive approach to ensuring their own safety and resilience.

National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Disaster Risk Reduction

The NPA is a national cost-sharing arrangement between Commonwealth and state and territory governments to support implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. Two grant programs operate in Victoria.

The first – State and Regional Priority Projects – provides funds for initiatives addressing critical risks identified in state and regional emergency management plans and risk assessments.

The second – Risk and Resilience Grants Program – supports communities and local governments to undertake local risk reduction and resilience initiatives.

Funds have so far been used for designing flood levees, bushfire mitigation works, upgrades to community disaster refuges and community disaster education programs.

WE WILL SUPPORT VICTORIANS TO REDUCE THEIR OWN EMERGENCY RISKS

Communities are best placed to understand and manage their own local risks because nothing beats local knowledge. We'll continue supporting individuals, communities, businesses and local government to implement locally-based, community-led risk reduction efforts and create opportunities for more. These will build on our successful community grants programs, including in partnership with the Commonwealth government.

We will empower individuals with the information, tools and education they need to reduce their own emergency risks. We'll do this by further developing programs in schools, community groups and business forums. We will work with communities and businesses to identify and address barriers and strengthen business continuity, and to support greater insurance uptake.

We will improve how we communicate timely and accessible risk information to all Victorians by developing accessible, interactive online platforms that capture, compile and share emergency risk and risk mitigation information and are considerate of end users. Dedicated effort will be made to support and inform CALD communities through translation services and partnering with trusted community networks. We'll also embrace new communication methods for warnings and alerts, including social media for quick wide reach to different audiences, while supporting traditional mediums. This will help ensure we deliver tailored messages to the community at the time and the location they are needed.

Melbourne Flood Hotspot Engagement Program

Many households aren't aware they live in a flood prone area. Melbourne's Flood Hotspot Engagement Program engages at-risk communities so they better understand their local risk and the action they can take to protect themselves and their properties.

Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) volunteers walk door to door explaining the dangers of driving on flooded roads, the importance of a safe evacuation route, where to go for flood information and how to prepare properties for flooding.

The program is remerging as COVID-19 safety measures lift, with 60 volunteers contributing around 300 hours. The program is making sure the right information reaches those who most need it, supporting communities to come together to effectively manage flooding.



PRIORITY TWO

Strengthen our use of data, analytics and intelligence to improve decision making

In line with community expectations, the emergency management sector will invest in up-to-date technology. We must be able to predict, plan for, and respond in a timely way, to future emergencies. Our data must be secure, meaningful, person-centred and foster community trust.

We will improve our use of data, analytics and intelligence (including forecasting and predictive analysis) to understand hazards and their potential impacts, strengthen our understanding of communities and their needs, improve the quality of our decision making and increase service effectiveness. At all times, we will maintain your security and foster trust in how we receive and use data.



WE WILL IMPROVE THE WAY WE GATHER, USE, PROCESS AND SHARE DATA TO INFORM INTELLIGENCE

Effective sharing and use of data is critical to analytics and intelligence in emergency management. It allows us to understand what is happening on the ground and direct limited resources to where they are most needed. It's the foundation of implementing evidence-based decisions and responsive emergency management.

Data is most valuable when it is well structured, available, linked, shared, protected and maintained. The Victorian Government emphasises building systems and processes that simplify data sharing and strengthen interoperability. Our work will be aligned with the government's Digital Strategy 2021–26 and we

will develop an emergency management sector data strategy with the Victorian Centre for Data Insights (VCDI). Consistent data standards will improve the quality of our data collection and sharing across high value areas and strengthen our capacity to prepare for, and respond to, future emergency management priorities.

Partnerships across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors will enhance our use of data and analytics to build better situational awareness, as well as operational and strategic intelligence capabilities and promote transparency and public trust. We'll build a sector level picture so we can better understand the technologies we need. With enhanced intelligence, we'll improve the manner in which we communicate to Victorians, so they have timely, meaningful, usable information that empowers them to share responsibility in an emergency.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN THE WAY WE USE AND ANALYSE DATA TO GENERATE ENHANCED INTELLIGENCE AND DRIVE EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

By itself, data is just facts and statistics. We realise its true value when we process and analyse data to generate intelligence. Only then can it drive better decision making. In a future with escalating and compounding emergencies, an informed approach to analytics will be key to making the best use of our limited resources. The Victorian government will explore opportunities to enhance analytics where the emergency sector faces the greatest need – risk assessments and 24/7 situational awareness and intelligence – so our capabilities are up-to-date, maximise the use of public funds and inform decision making at all levels.

We will focus on improving data and analytics capabilities, especially our ability to generate intelligence at speed and scale, by improving strategic partnerships with industry providers. Connected data will help the right people make well informed and evidence-based decisions, ensuring public value and impact for Victorians.

Using data to inform COVID-19 decision making

In January 2021, EMV established a formal partnership with VCDI to enhance the emergency management sector's data and analytics capability. Together they co-developed the COVID-19 Decision Support Tool providing the State Control Team with key health metrics via daily automated reports so decision-makers had access to timely, relevant information. They also delivered the Mobility Forecast Tool which predicted community mobility, enabling planning and allocation of resources to areas of greatest need and delivery of targeted and tailored community messaging.

The partnership is now working on an Emergency Management Sector Data Strategy to strengthen how the sector collects, uses and shares data that supports decision-makers before, during and after emergencies.





Building flood intelligence for timely and tailored community warnings

The 2010–11 floods had a serious impact on over 100 communities. The Floods Review pointed to the value of tailored and timely warnings as an effective community safety measure.

A collaborative approach between the **Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)** catchment management authorities, local government and VICSES has resulted in an extensive flood intelligence database – ‘FloodZoom’. It collects, stores and presents flood information and means accredited flood analysts can now advise community and infrastructure operators about likely impacts to property and services.

Enhancements to FloodZoom are seeking to capitalise on the ever-increasing availability of real time web-enabled information.

WE WILL COLLECT AND USE DATA IN A SECURE MANNER THAT MAINTAINS PRIVACY AND TRUST, WHILE ALSO ENHANCING OUR DECISION MAKING

Technology offers a powerful way to streamline and improve service delivery. However, as we grasp this opportunity, we must be respectful to our community and delivery partners when sourcing, using and safeguarding information. The Victorian government will build digital assets, systems and processes that include security and management arrangements to handle personal and sensitive information in a way that does not sacrifice the privacy or trust of communities. All data must be protected from misuse and be operated by a skilled workforce that can ensure asset integrity, while pursuing innovation and data sharing.

Victorians expect and deserve that, when they share their lived experiences, they and their stories will be treated with respect and dignity. Platforms will be socially inclusive and allow for personalisation so they create experiences that help and empower everyone and make it easy to access support, particularly after a loss. By building and operating data systems using a trauma-informed approach we will minimise the need for people to retell difficult experiences or divulge personal details.

Data decisions will be transparent and ethical, to empower Victorians while protecting users, systems and data.

PEOPLE-CENTRED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PRIORITY THREE

Support communities to be prepared and recover well after emergencies

Resilient communities can use their connections, networks and combined strengths to better cope with shocks, including emergencies and disasters.

We will identify and invest in strengthening community lifelines and supporting communities and businesses with the information and skills they need to act. We will also continue to partner with local government and recovery practitioners – working with communities and businesses to understand their capacity, strengths and risk factors and supporting them to plan and respond effectively, recover, adapt and thrive.



WE WILL EMBED COMMUNITY AND PLACE IN HOW WE DO BUSINESS AND PRIORITISE THOSE MOST AT-RISK

With increasing pressure on the state's emergency management system, there is a growing understanding that emergency management is in everyone's interests – all Victorians can play a part in it and share responsibility. We will support those who can, to look after themselves, but recognise some individuals may require additional supports to keep them safe. We will identify and engage with those most at risk in emergencies to understand their lived experiences and needs, so we can target our support, build on strengths and achieve better outcomes.

Communities in different places have their own, unique built and natural environments, social networks, cultural heritage, economic conditions and diversity of people. These factors all affect community resilience and people's experience of emergencies. We will focus on understanding the unique experiences, strengths and challenges facing particular Victorians in our planning, decision making, and service delivery.

We will deliver more authentic engagement and increase opportunities for greater inclusivity in our planning and programs. Services will be person-centred, equitable, inclusive, culturally safe and focused on empowering people and communities. We will link resilience to impact and needs assessment, seeking active participation from a range of local people in emergency management. We'll aim for more targeted interventions, services and support and engage local people from different sectors as active participants in emergency management.

The Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership (the Multicultural Partnership) project

The Victorian Government established the Multicultural Partnership with the Victorian Council of Social Services and the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was set up to strengthen relationships between CALD communities and emergency services. The partnership worked with trusted individuals and organisations to develop and deliver tailored information and training programs. Vital health information reached communities in a culturally appropriate format and individuals were supported to act on it.

The program is expanding, building on the important connections already made. Government now has a better understanding of unique community needs and can help strengthen community resilience so people can prepare for, cope with and recover from emergencies. Actions include:

- ▶ further improving culturally appropriate communication
- ▶ building community relationships to increase mutual understanding and trust
- ▶ increasing cultural safety and responsiveness for all who participate in, or engage with, emergency management organisations.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY NETWORKS AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER EMERGENCIES

Communities can stand together. Many people are willing and able to step up and offer support through incredibly difficult periods. However, without the necessary connections, skills, capabilities, and resources, this can wear on their individual and collective resilience. We will clearly define the adaptive capacity of communities, business, local government, the emergency management sector and supporting organisations, being specific in our expectations for how responsibility is shared so communities will find it easier to decide how best to use their leadership and networks.

We'll improve development opportunities, education and engagement, so community leaders have basic knowledge and skills and ensure local emergency planning and other decisions affecting community resilience include community at the table.

Strengthening local networks before, rather than during, an emergency will mean people can better help each other when it is needed most.

WE WILL WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS TO MINIMISE DISRUPTIONS TO COMMUNITY LIFELINES AND PRIORITISE BUILDING BACK BETTER

Social networks and leadership capacity are just one part of a resilient community. Some emergencies cause a chain of impacts across multiple sectors and service providers, from local road access to telecommunications and health. Sometimes it might be safer if people consider building back better or in different locations with lower risk.

We'll continue to work with industry and local government partners to identify vulnerabilities and interdependences in critical infrastructure assets and systems to reduce risks, impacts and consequences for communities. After an emergency, we'll continue to meet with communities to collectively decide how we adapt, transform and minimise future risk.

SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE SECTOR

PRIORITY FOUR

Build a sustainable emergency management workforce that represents the people it serves

In a major emergency, Victorians expect to be supported by a capable and effective workforce who are there for the long haul. We will design new and creative ways to attract skilled and experienced career and volunteer workers so Victoria can respond to our largest and most complex emergencies.

To build a sustainable workforce, we must be accountable for their health, wellbeing and development opportunities.

We will also make it easier for as many Victorians as possible to take part in our emergency workforce to strengthen our emergency planning, response and recovery.



VOLUNTEERING WILL BE EASIER AND MORE REWARDING

Volunteering is the bedrock of our emergency management workforce. Around 100,000 volunteers contribute across disaster risk reduction, emergency response, relief and recovery every year. To keep Victorians safe and resilient, we must be able to attract, support and retain volunteers. As we face more frequent and intense emergencies, their role will be even more critical.

Victorians' ability to volunteer changes throughout life as they face pressures like the demands of family, to financial barriers and physical limitations. We need to create pathways that encourage lifetime contribution. We'll support greater flexibility, reduce key

barriers to volunteer participation and retention, and strengthen mobility through integrated, shared and formally recognised training and development opportunities. In addition, we'll capture and build on existing knowledge and expertise to support emerging leaders – asking those at the end of their volunteer journey to become mentors.

We understand that not all Victorians can volunteer regularly and we need to plan accordingly. We'll develop a comprehensive strategy for coordinating spontaneous volunteers – harnessing Victorians' goodwill, strengthening community connections and resilience and empowering Victorians to support their communities when they are needed most.



OUR WORKPLACES WILL BE SAFE AND INCLUSIVE

Victorians rightly expect emergency management organisations to be safe, inclusive and supportive workplaces that value wellbeing and welcome people from all walks of life. A workforce that reflects the communities it serves is better able to understand its strengths, challenges and biggest risks.

While progress has been made, we know that emergency management organisations need to continue to diversify in line with Victoria's changing demographics and community expectations.

We will focus on key initiatives that build the gender, cultural and age diversity of our emergency management sector. It will include embedding flexibility in deployments and rostering, and building more inclusive approaches to recruitment, training and accreditation.

We will also respond swiftly to practices and behaviour that are unsafe and unwelcoming. We will work with people to strengthen culture and wellbeing and ensure we have leading systems and approaches to manage workplace complaints.

Planned Burn Taskforce

As part of the Safer Together program, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and DEECA established the State-wide Planned Burn Taskforce. It aims to increase the firefighting workforce and upskill volunteers.

The Taskforce develops volunteers' fire skills while providing local brigades with extra capacity for planned burns. Interested members across Victoria are told where and when people are needed so they can join local CFA and Forest Fire Management Victoria resources on the ground. Deploying this network of highly skilled volunteers means greater flexibility and capacity for planned burns.

The Taskforce continues to grow, with over 600 Victorian members participating.

WE WILL INCREASE CAPACITY THROUGH GREATER MOBILITY AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

To respond to multiple complex emergencies, we need to be able to tap into a much larger workforce. To do this, we will strengthen mobility across the Victorian public service – including developing a greater surge capacity by building dedicated resourcing pools to draw on.

We will continue to strengthen our partnerships with local government and the Commonwealth to build a clear understanding of capability and capacity. We must ensure we have enough people to help us when we need them and can reciprocate when required. Our continuing partnership with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is essential. We must facilitate new strategic partnerships and build on existing ones with the private sector and non-government organisations.

While we have developed strong networks with critical infrastructure providers and community partners in the lead up to and during COVID-19, we will need to continue to build and strengthen these relationships. We plan to design programs that maintain the knowledge, skills and connections of the thousands of public and private sector COVID-19 volunteers so we can re-engage them in the future.

There's a role for everyone

Emergency services volunteers across Victoria play a vital role not only in a crisis, but every day of the year.

Volunteers are the backbone of many emergency services agencies including the VICSES and the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Volunteers come from all walks of life, ages, and backgrounds. Diversity of membership is critical for success. There are plenty of volunteering opportunities both in frontline and other support roles.

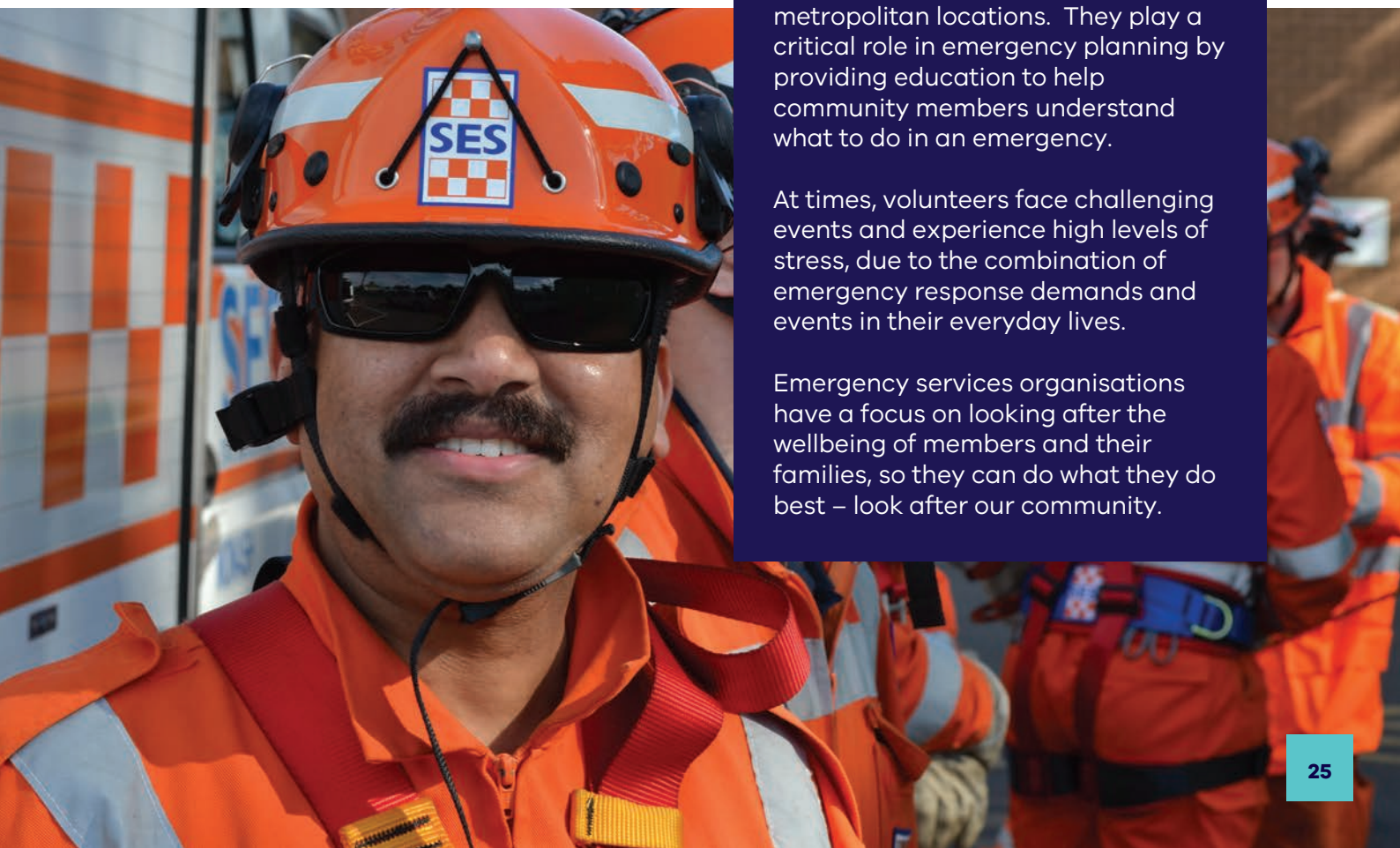
Volunteers receive recognised training and skills development across a wide range of areas from first aid to fire response and general rescue, chainsaw operations, community education and media.

Volunteering provides a unique sense of satisfaction and camaraderie and gives a sense of community and purpose.

Volunteers assist their local communities in rural, regional and metropolitan locations. They play a critical role in emergency planning by providing education to help community members understand what to do in an emergency.

At times, volunteers face challenging events and experience high levels of stress, due to the combination of emergency response demands and events in their everyday lives.

Emergency services organisations have a focus on looking after the wellbeing of members and their families, so they can do what they do best – look after our community.



PRIORITY FIVE

Strengthen governance arrangements to improve accountability, cooperation and participation

Emergency management is a shared responsibility and we all have a role to play. To work together effectively, we need strong governance arrangements where roles and responsibilities are clear and well understood; empowered people who can deliver what is required; and clear lines of accountability. Transparent decision making allows Victorians to have trust in and understand the how and why of chosen options.

We'll embed partnerships in our arrangements and keep building more inclusive governance structures so Victorians can influence and shape emergency management decisions that affect them.



VICTORIANS WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO SHAPE, INFLUENCE AND INFORM DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM

For governance to be effective, it must be inclusive and reflect the constituents it serves. Inclusion, in both processes and outcomes, is vital. Participation leads to more responsive decision making that better meets people's needs and builds commitment from both individuals and the community. Empowered decision makers have confidence in what was decided. The Victorian Government will build governance mechanisms that provide formal and informal opportunities for community, volunteers and industry to have a voice in shaping emergency management decisions that affect them.

We will capitalise on the success of initiatives like Safer Together that recognise community priorities and expertise and the importance of local solutions to local problems; and continue to invest in leadership training and capacity building at the grassroots level, improving inclusivity for Victoria's diverse communities.

We will keep supporting community-led approaches where communities apply local skills, knowledge and experience and have ownership over decisions. Importantly, we'll support emergency management practices and initiatives led by First Nations people and work with Traditional Owners, as equal partners, recognising culture, Country and community in planning and decision making.



WE WILL BUILD AND EMBED PARTNERSHIPS IN OUR ARRANGEMENTS

The emergency management sector cannot meet the challenges of the future alone. Partnerships will be increasingly vital to how we work together. To keep Victorians safe we will need to recognise, work with and leverage the expertise, capability and capacity of all levels of government, academia, industry and the not-for-profit sector.

The Victorian Government will embed partnerships into our governance arrangements and make sure these arrangements provide the simplicity and the flexibility we need to deliver greater value to Victoria over time.

We will work with local government to clarify and support their crucial role in planning for and coordinating local relief and recovery in emergencies and their role in building community resilience. Working with Commonwealth and state and territory governments will enhance cross-border arrangements, strengthen national preparedness, emphasise greater cooperation across interjurisdictional risks and improve resource sharing arrangements. We'll streamline how we partner with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to achieve the best possible results.

Partnering with Traditional Owners to preserve our heritage

During the 2019–20 Victorian bushfires, many scar trees were at risk of burning.

"Aboriginal scarred trees are found across all of Australia, with most being over 100 years old. They hold great significance to our local Mobs," says DEECA heritage specialist, Gerry Laughton. "Protecting these pieces of history for future generations is one of the most important things we can do as First Nations people."

Thanks to the swift, innovative and dedicated work of a coalition of Traditional Owners and DEECA staff, scar trees were saved. Wrapping their trunks in protective insulation (adapted from materials used to protect house roofs from embers and direct heat) and creating fire breaks three to five metres wide beneath the trunks, meant fire did not directly reach them.

Traditional Owners helped with the removal of insulation once the fire areas were deemed safe.

Developed over the last seven years, this method of asset protection has also been used to protect heritage bush huts. It is being adapted and improved through experience, research and development.

Existing partnerships with industries and businesses will be reinforced, using their unique knowledge, expertise and capability to help us all to deliver better outcomes in high value areas by:

- ▶ working to better understand industry's needs
- ▶ continuing to enhance our critical infrastructure sector resilience networks
- ▶ strengthening supply chain resilience
- ▶ leveraging the power of technology.

Emergency management planning

In 2018, the Victorian Government introduced legislation to strengthen and improve Victoria's emergency management planning arrangements. State, regional and municipal planning committees were established under the *Emergency Management Act 2013* with the Emergency Management Commissioner responsible for state-level planning. Regional and municipal emergency management planning committees (REMPs and MEMPs) – designed jointly by government, industry and community organisations – were a national first.

Each plan covers the unique circumstances, needs and risks at each planning level and identifies strategies to manage consequences and community impacts. They recognise that emergency management planning is a shared responsibility and that expertise sits with a range of players in and outside government.

The plans have strengthened participation, including with industry and community, and enabled diverse groups to work together to develop a transparent, shared understanding of the actions needed to keep Victorians safe.

WE UNDERSTAND OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARE EMPOWERED TO DELIVER THEM BY WORKING TOGETHER

A shared understanding of roles and responsibilities and clear lines of accountability for command, control and coordination are at the heart of effective emergency management. It means we will have the right people with the appropriate accountability, taking responsibility and making decisions to protect the lives of Victorians, at the right time. Governance must be right, so we work from a position of strength to address challenges. Arrangements must be contemporary, flexible, and practical.

The Victorian Government will clarify roles and responsibilities, removing any ambiguities, so everyone knows exactly what is expected of them in all situations. Mechanisms will be in place so those who are accountable are able to lead, and there are safeguards if the system fails. This includes establishing dedicated leadership in relief and recovery. We will also strengthen sector-wide exercises, so arrangements are well-tested and operational before an emergency.

All this will ensure that when the time comes, those who are responsible will be better able to act.



Strategic Action Plan

To deliver on the emergency management priorities outlined in this Roadmap, we need a clear plan for action. This Roadmap is supported by a rolling three-year Strategic Action Plan (SAP).

The SAP outlines who is doing what, and by when, to deliver on our priorities and create our vision of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*. We'll update this every year, to ensure our actions address areas of greatest need and impact. Our priorities will be enduring for the lifetime of the Roadmap.

The SAP 2022–25 builds on extensive work already being undertaken by the emergency management sector to deliver on reviews and inquiries and lessons learned from recent emergencies. Some actions are unique to individual departments and agencies, while the majority will require collaboration. All actions are focused on the sector's commitment to working as one and within our 'all communities, all emergencies' approach.

The SAP 2022–25 and future SAPs can be found at <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/StrategicActionPlan>.



Where to from here?



Our Roadmap, along with its supporting SAP, offers a clear path for emergency management reform in Victoria. It tells Victorians what we want to achieve over the next six years and the steps we're taking to get there.

We will embed continuous improvement in our ways of working

While it's important to have a plan, it's also important to be able to adjust our approach as we learn from new emergencies, monitor activities, evaluate impacts and research new evidence and intelligence. Responses and commitments to Inquiries will be brought together in the SAP, where they align, so we have a single, collective picture of investment and effort.

We will update the SAP each year and review activity so we are always investing effort where it will have the greatest community impact

Our annual review will draw on a clear understanding of our progress as well as the latest state, regional and local risk assessments and intelligence.

A Sector Outcomes Measurement Strategy will be developed, as we introduce the Framework, so we better evaluate performance against our vision and identify issues early. The sector will transition from output-based to outcomes-based reporting within the Strategy's lifetime.

We will be transparent about our impact

We'll continue to be transparent about our progress. The *Emergency Management Act 2013* requires IGEM to monitor the SAP's delivery and report on it to the Minister for Emergency Services. These reports will continue to be public.

We will demonstrate our leadership in emergency management

We must work together to reduce risk, plan, prepare, respond and recover, but some risks cannot be managed by individuals and communities. The Victorian Government has primary responsibility and accountability for emergency management and this SAP represents that commitment.

Emergencies don't respect borders. We'll continue collaborating at federal, state and territory level, advocating for Victorian interests in national reforms of emergency management that allow us to deliver on our vision of *Safer and More Resilient Communities*.





Acronyms



ACRONYM	FULL TITLE
ADF	Australian Defence Force
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CFA	Country Fire Authority
COVID-19	Coronavirus
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
IGEM	Inspector-General of Emergency Management
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
NPA	National Partnership Agreement
REMPC	Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SCRC	State Crisis and Resilience Council
the Framework	The Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Framework
the Multicultural Partnership	The Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership project
the Roadmap	The Strategic Roadmap for Emergency Management in Victoria
VCDI	Victorian Centre for Data Insights
VICSES	Victorian State Emergency Service

