

Implementation monitoring of 'Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector' and 'Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season'

Progress Report

2022



IGEM
Inspector-General
for Emergency
Management

Publication information

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management acknowledges and respects Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

IGEM honours Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practice.

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Preface

The aftermath of the 2019–20 fire season continues to have a ripple effect on communities, infrastructure, and the environment. However, it has also led to vital reflections and opportunities for reforms on how emergencies are managed in Victoria.

My *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season: Phase 1 – Community and sector preparedness for and response to the 2019–20 fire season* report (Phase 1 report) made recommendations to ensure that Victoria will be better prepared for future events. Following the release of the Phase 1 report and my *Review of 10 Years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector* (10 Year Review), the Victorian Government put forward detailed implementation plans outlining actions to address each of the 22 recommendations from both reports.

This is the second progress report assuring the community and government of the implementation of these actions. Of the 139 actions committed by the government to address recommendations from the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 report, a further 34 actions have been assessed as complete or closed, leaving 47 actions in progress.

The implemented actions have brought about significant changes to better equip the sector and the community to handle future emergencies. I am pleased to report that the Office of Bushfire Risk Management is now established, and I commend the efforts of the sector in progressing development of the whole-of-sector bushfire strategy. Both initiatives will contribute to a clear vision for bushfire fuel management in Victoria.

Other significant achievements include the delivery of the Victorian Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Framework which articulates high-level outcomes the sector seeks to achieve for communities before, during and after an emergency. The evacuation exercises carried out by Victoria Police will help to better prepare responsible organisations to handle future emergencies and evacuate high-risk communities efficiently.

I also acknowledge the efforts of Emergency Management Victoria and sector partners to implement the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System and the Australian Warning System across Victoria. This is an important step forward to achieving clear, consistent messaging across the community. It is also worth noting that the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions-led Victorian implementation of the Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters program is near completion, which will better connect and prepare high-risk communities for future emergencies.

Implementation of remaining actions has not been without their challenges. Many actions have had their planned completion timeframes extended due to funding constraints, availability of resources, the consultation necessary for complex legislative reforms, and other difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, I appreciate the cooperation and efforts of lead organisations in implementing the remaining actions and recommendations across this period.

On 30 July 2021 I delivered my *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season: Phase 2 – Progress and effectiveness of Victoria's immediate relief and recovery arrangements* report (Phase 2 report) to the Minister for Emergency Services, which concluded the independent Inquiry. The Phase 2 report contains 15 recommendations to address relief and recovery arrangements. Much of the work in relation to these recommendations depends on establishing a dedicated recovery entity – Emergency Recovery Victoria. The government has also worked to develop an implementation statement to support the delivery of Phase 2 recommendations. I look forward to reporting on the implementation of these recommendations in my next progress report, consistent with my monitoring of Phase 1.

In closing, I acknowledge the significant progress made during this reporting period, and commend all lead organisations for working collaboratively to establish and embed key initiatives and to foster continuous improvement of emergency management arrangements.

Tony Pearce
Inspector-General for Emergency Management

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Acronyms and abbreviations

10 Year Review	Review of 10 Years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector
AFAC	Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
AFDRS	Australian Fire Danger Rating System
AIIMS	Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System
AWS	Australian Warning System
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
BRV	Bushfire Recovery Victoria
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CB EMLO	Cross Border Emergency Management Liaison Officer
CCOSC	Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee
CEMP	Community Emergency Management Plan
CERA	Community Emergency Risk Assessment
CFA	Country Fire Authority
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DH	Department of Health
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
DoT	Department of Transport
EM Act 2013	<i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i>
EM-COP	Emergency Management Common Operating Picture
EMC	Emergency Management Commissioner
EMCCSC	Emergency Management Capability and Capacity Steering Committee
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
ERV	Emergency Recovery Victoria
FFMVic	Forest Fire Management Victoria
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
FSIP1	Fire Season Inquiry Phase 1
Government	Victorian Government

ICC	Incident Control Centre
IDC	Inter-Departmental Committee
IGEM	Inspector-General for Emergency Management
IMT	Incident Management Team
IPOC	Incident Police Operations Centre
JSOP	Joint Standard Operating Procedure
LRAP	Learning Reform Action Plan
m	million
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
Minister	Minister for Emergency Services
MNHP	Mobile Network Hardening Program
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBN	National Broadband Network
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NRRA	National Recovery and Resilience Agency
OBRM	Office of Bushfire Risk Management
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
Phase 1 report	<i>Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season: Phase 1 – Community and sector preparedness for and response to the 2019–20 fire season</i>
Phase 2 report	<i>Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season: Phase 2 – Progress and effectiveness of Victoria's immediate relief and recovery arrangements</i>
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
RAPs	Registered Aboriginal Parties
RCC	Regional Control Centre
REMP	Regional Emergency Management Plan
REMPC	Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee
RERA	Regional Emergency Risk Assessment
RTM&E	Real Time Monitoring and Evaluation
SAFER	State-Wide Analysis of Evacuation Risk
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SCC	State Control Centre
SCRC	State Crisis and Resilience Council

SEEKER	Simulations of Emergency Evacuations for Knowledge, Education and Response
SEMP	State Emergency Management Plan
SEMPC	State Emergency Management Planning Committee
SERCD	State Emergency Response Coordination Division
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STAND	Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters
10YOR	10 Years of Reform
VEMI	Victorian Emergency Management Institute
VERA	Victorian Emergency Risk Assessment
VicPol	Victoria Police
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service
VPF	Victorian Preparedness Framework

Executive summary

This is IGEM's second progress report on the implementation of Victorian Government actions in response to the following IGEM reports.

Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector (10 Year Review)

This review assessed emergency management reforms in the ten years since the 2009 Victorian Bushfires and made five recommendations related to risk management, community information, recovery, outcomes frameworks, and sector capability and capacity.

Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season: Phase 1 – Community and sector preparedness for and response to the 2019–20 fire season (Phase 1 report)

In January 2020 the government announced IGEM would conduct a two-phased, independent Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season. IGEM's Phase 1 report delivered in July 2020, considered preparedness for and response to the fires and made 17 recommendations for continuous improvement across a range of themes.

The government released and responded to both IGEM reports in October 2020, accepting all 22 recommendations. This progress report provides an assessment of implementation of reforms for the period to July 2022 and key developments since then.

Implementation progress

IGEM's *Implementation monitoring of 'Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector' and 'Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 1' Progress Report 2021* (2021 progress report) found that 58 of the 139 government actions were either complete or closed, with 81 actions remaining in progress.

Of the 81 actions monitored in the current report, IGEM finds that:

- 32 actions are now complete
- 2 actions are closed, with no further activity planned
- 47 actions remain in progress.

Overall 92 of the 139 actions committed to in response to the two IGEM reports have now either been completed or closed.

IGEM notes the continuing operational pressures and impacts on resources of organisations leading implementation of these actions. When conducting its implementation monitoring, IGEM has regard to the resources available to agencies as set out in the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (EM Act 2013).

Overview of implementation progress – 10 Year Review

10YOR Recommendation 1 – Knowledge and learning

The 10 Year Review recommended that Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) lead the development of a sector-wide outcomes framework and provide guidance to the sector on how to incorporate outcomes and measures in its business-as-usual activities.

EMV and sector partners have worked together to finalise the Victorian Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Framework which was endorsed by the Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet on 25 July 2022. The framework highlights the high-level outcomes the sector seeks to achieve for communities before, during and after an emergency, supporting accountability and performance management.

Subject to funding and resourcing, EMV also plans to develop an outcomes measurement strategy to provide outcome measures, identify barriers and enablers to data collection, and support baseline and future reporting against the framework.

All actions under 10YOR Recommendation 1 are now complete.

10YOR Recommendation 2 – Risk management arrangements

The 10 Year Review found that Victoria's statewide risk assessment did not reflect many recent changes in the community and the changing risk profile of Victoria. IGEM recommended the development of a contemporary and systemic approach to identifying and mitigating risks across the state.

Across 2021–22 EMV has progressed work on the Victorian Emergency Risk Assessment Project, which will update the current state emergency risk assessment in the Emergency Risks in Victoria report (10YOR Action 2.6). In July 2021 EMV also commenced the Regional Emergency Risk Assessment Project to develop a regional-level risk assessment methodology and facilitate assessments of selected emergency risks. The assessments will be used by Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees to inform future versions of their Regional Emergency Management Plans and identify any specific sub-plans and mitigation, response and recovery actions needed at the regional level.

EMV is also supporting Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees to update their Municipal Emergency Management Plans as they become scheduled for review (10YOR Action 2.5). All Municipal-level plans are scheduled to be updated by 1 December 2023 in accordance with their existing three-year review cycles.

Two actions under 10YOR Recommendation 2 remain in progress.

10YOR Recommendation 3 – Community preparedness

The 10 Year Review identified some significant improvements in how the sector engaged with communities on emergency preparedness. However, the volume of information delivered through preparedness programs and community engagement initiatives was not well coordinated.

IGEM recommended that EMV and the sector develop and promote a community preparedness strategy for all emergencies aligned to existing community resilience initiatives and with a clear, consistent and accessible preparedness message.

EMV completed the final three actions in response to this recommendation during 2021–22:

- 10YOR Actions 3.3 and 3.4 reviewed some existing community resilience and preparedness strategies and initiatives, and measured their effectiveness – the review identified limited evidence of the effectiveness of the strategies and initiatives in building community safety and resilience.
- 10YOR Action 3.5 consolidated the contents of the Victorian Preparedness Goal into the Victorian Preparedness Framework as part of a sector and community review of both documents.

IGEM notes that none of the actions in response to Recommendation 3 include the development and promotion of a new preparedness strategy. However IGEM considers that the above work – and the articulation of the roles and responsibilities of individuals and households, community groups and networks, businesses and the emergency management sector in the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) (10YOR Action 3.2 completed in 2020–21) – provides a platform for future sector initiatives related to community preparedness.

All actions under 10YOR Recommendation 3 are now complete.

10YOR Recommendation 4 – Capability development

The 10 Year Review found that emergency management personnel had improved access to training and exercising opportunities. However, the available opportunities were not always aligned to their training needs.

IGEM recommended that EMV delivers a comprehensive sector-wide capability strategy for emergency management personnel, building on its existing work in this area.

EMV completed three key actions in response to this recommendation during 2021–22:

- 10YOR Action 4.4 reviewed the current training and accreditation program for incident management personnel.
- 10YOR Action 4.5 identified the resourcing, training and professional development needed to enhance leadership and operations and support ongoing interoperability and resource integration across the sector.
- 10YOR Action 4.8 reviewed the Victorian Preparedness Framework to ensure it is fit for purpose and identifies the needs of the sector.

The outcomes of 10YOR actions 4.4 and 4.5 have been consolidated into the Learning Reform Action Plan (LRAP) which enables the building and sustainment of the sector's capability requirements into the future. This action plan was endorsed by the Emergency Management Capability and Capacity Steering Committee in September 2022.

Four actions under 10YOR Recommendation 4 remain in progress or are yet to commence.

Two actions relating to the design of a future emergency management operating model for Victoria are due for completion in June 2023 (10YOR Actions 4.2 and 4.3). A further two actions to implement the preferred emergency management operating model are yet to commence (10YOR Actions 4.6 and 4.7).

10YOR Review Recommendation 5 – Recovery reform

The 10 Year Review found that recovery coordination was often reactive, siloed and disconnected across Victoria's recovery organisations, due in part to a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

To address these issues, IGEM recommended that EMV leads the development of comprehensive operational recovery guidelines.

In December 2021 the Victorian Government launched an Emergency Recovery Resource Portal containing key recovery documents for the disaster recovery workforce, as well as guidance for communities and agencies supporting recovery.

EMV advised that the establishment of Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) and its accountability for state and regional recovery coordination requires that new guidance be developed to outline operational recovery arrangements and how these integrate with response and relief coordination. A new Relief and Recovery Coordination Standard Operating Procedure will be developed to provide guidance on operational coordination arrangements and support role clarity ahead of the 2022–23 summer season, complementing the recovery guidance already available on the portal.

Three actions under 10YOR Recommendation 5 remain in progress.

Overview of implementation progress – Phase 1 report

FSIP1 Recommendation 1 – Preparedness and training

The Phase 1 report found that training conducted in 2018 and 2019 placed agencies in a strong position to respond to the 2019–20 fires. However, evaluations and reports on training and exercises during this period had identified some areas for improvement.

Based on this, IGEM recommended that recruitment, briefings, training, plans and procedures be completed before seasonal events were likely to occur. IGEM recommended that these agency preparedness arrangements feature in the Emergency Management Commissioner's annual attestation to the Minister for Emergency Services.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted the completion of a number of EMV-led actions in response to FSIP1 Recommendation 1 to improve preparedness ahead of the 2020–21 summer season.

Since then, as part of the completion of FSIP1 Action 1.8, EMV has broadened the attestation process to address a wider range of emergency risks, including non-seasonal risks such as cyber, biosecurity and pandemic. This reinforces the requirement for the sector to be prepared to respond to any emergency event on any day of the year.

All actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 1 are now complete.

FSIP1 Recommendation 2 – Victorian arrangements for fuel management

The Phase 1 report found that structural and policy issues and conflicting and complex legislative requirements inhibited the amount of fuel management conducted by fire agencies and private land managers. The report also found that the fuel management legislation did not support a true cross-tenure approach across public and private land.

IGEM recommended that the State review and where necessary amend fuel management legislation to address these issues.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) are leading the review of the legislative framework, which IGEM positively notes will consider a broader range of issues than those raised by Recommendation 2. The timeframe has been extended from December 2022 to July 2023 to allow sufficient time to engage with stakeholders (FSIP1 Action 2.2).

DELWP also continues to:

- work with Traditional Owners to implement the Cultural Fire Strategy (FSIP1 Action 2.1).
- work with road and rail managers to ensure clarity on regulatory controls related to fuel management and streamline approval processes for their fuel management activities (FSIP1 Action 2.3).

Three actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 2 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 3 – Effectiveness of Safer Together

The Phase 1 report found that, while the Safer Together program was intended to be a multi-agency initiative, uptake and acceptance had varied both within and between agencies, affecting delivery. IGEM also noted that, despite a concerted effort to engage with communities, community feedback suggested there was poor visibility and a lack of understanding of the activities occurring as part of Safer Together. IGEM notes that in 2020–21 DELWP delivered an expanded program with increased involvement from government departments and local government.

In 2021–22 DELWP continues to:

- progress the development of a whole-of-sector bushfire strategy to set the 10-year vision and outcomes for bushfire management in Victoria (FSIP1 Action 3.3). The strategy is now expected to be delivered in June 2023, to allow a more integrated approach to public consultation and stakeholder engagement, including with Traditional Owners.
- work with the Department of Transport (DoT) to identify road datasets that can be used to manage bushfire risk (FSIP1 Action 3.6).

FSIP1 Action 3.4 is in the early stages of development with DELWP intending to update its Strategic Planning Operating Procedure to better reference private land and roadside fuel management. This work is dependent on the outcomes of the legislative review being undertaken under FSIP1 Action 2.2.

Three actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 3 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 4 – Barriers to cross-tenure fuel management

The Phase 1 report found that cross-tenure fuel management was limited due to a lack of common arrangements or a single authorising body requiring land managers and fire agencies to plan, conduct, monitor, report and evaluate their fuel management programs in a coordinated manner.

In response, DELWP has established the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) to implement a consistent whole-of-sector approach to fuel management (FSIP1 Action 4.1). OBRM is supported by an advisory panel – announced in October 2021 by the then Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, comprising senior executives representing key land and fire management agencies and members with a range of technical expertise (FSIP1 Action 4.2). This panel provides advice on a range of policy and planning items including OBRM's strategic plan, proposed performance targets for fuel management, and the expansion of targets to other agencies and land tenures.

All actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 4 are now complete.

FSIP1 Recommendation 5 – Community perceptions of the fuel management program

The Phase 1 report found that a significant percentage of the community were not satisfied with current fuel management practices on public land, and that these beliefs were not easily reconciled due to fundamental differences in the values and experiences underpinning them.

IGEM recommended that DELWP leads a community engagement process to improve the Victorian community's understanding of fuel and land management.

During this reporting period, DELWP has:

- produced 2021–22 bushfire season communication materials that provide simple information about Victoria's fuel management program (FSIP1 Action 5.2).
- developed a community engagement process (FSIP1 Action 5.3) and shared guidance and principles (FSIP1 Action 5.4) as flexible tools that can be applied to support community engagement about bushfire risk understanding.

DELWP continues to work on including an understanding of behaviour change in its whole-of-sector bushfire strategy to support people to take action to address risk in their local area and on their own land (FSIP1 Action 5.5).

One action under FSIP1 Recommendation 5 remains in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 6 – Mechanical treatments

The Phase 1 report found that Victoria's use of mechanical treatments had not increased since DELWP committed to do so in 2015–16, indicating that it was not using mechanical means to compensate for lost opportunities due to reduced planned burning weather windows.

IGEM recommended that DELWP increases the application of non-burning fuel management treatments and provide details of this work in its annual fuel management reports.

DELWP has since expanded its permanent network of strategic fuel breaks including completing 741 km in 2021–22 and has contracted works to meet its cumulative target of 1447 km by December 2022 (FSIP1 Action 6.5). DELWP also included comparative data on the non-burn fuel treatment component of fuel management on public land in its 2020–21 fuel management report (FSIP1 Action 6.2).

In 2021–22 DELWP also developed a strategy outlining a range of activities that it will undertake to secure forest contractor services for land and fire management (FSIP1 Action 6.7).

DELWP continues to progress other actions under this recommendation by:

- delivering an expanded 365-day per year fuel management program consisting of planned burning, mechanical fuel treatments such as slashing, and constructing strategic fuel breaks (FSIP1 Action 6.6).
- upgrading and improving strategic fire access roads and crossing structures (FSIP1 Action 6.8).

DoT has also completed an investigation of roadside vegetation management and found that native grasslands (ideally regularly burnt) are an effective roadside fuel break for fire management and for biodiversity conservation (FSIP1 Action 6.10). DoT plans to incorporate these findings into business-as-usual roadside maintenance planning where funding allows and for future budget investment proposals.

Three actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 6 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 7 – Fuel management tools

The Phase 1 report identified gaps in the tools and models used by Victoria's fuel management program and recommended that DELWP develop and distribute land and fuel management tools to enable a more consistent approach.

During 2021–22 DELWP finalised arrangements for core cultural fire funding, spanning a four-year period, with 10 of Victoria's legally recognised Traditional Owner Groups under the Cultural Fire Strategy, completing FSIP1 Action 7.6.

All actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 7 are now complete.

FSIP1 Recommendation 8 – Fuel management reporting

The Phase 1 report found that it was difficult to determine the effectiveness of Victoria’s fuel management program in reducing the harmful effects of the 2019–20 bushfires due to a lack of measurable objectives and inconsistencies in reporting processes.

To address this, IGEM recommended that DELWP develops a common set of objectives and reporting requirements for all organisations with a legislated role in fuel management.

DELWP is in the process of developing an expanded Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework that includes fuel management activities on private land, roadsides and public land managed by other agencies (FSIP1 Action 8.3). DELWP also intends to include available activity data for private land, roadsides and public land managed by other agencies in its 2021–22 Fuel Management Report due for publication later in 2022, along with information on how these fuel management activities contribute to risk reduction.

One action under FSIP1 Recommendation 8 remains in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 9 – Appropriateness of the current residual risk target

The concept of residual risk refers to risk left over after fuel has been reduced (either planned or through bushfires). The Phase 1 report found that the residual risk target was a difficult concept for communities and individuals to understand.

IGEM recommended that DELWP, in collaboration with the Country Fire Authority (CFA), undertake a review of the residual risk target to support greater understanding of fuel management and to ensure its currency.

Across 2021–22 DELWP completed two actions (FSIP1 Actions 9.1 and 9.2) under the Risk 2.0 project that delivered enhanced risk data and modelling. The enhanced risk modelling will contribute towards DELWP's development of new residual risk targets under FSIP1 Action 9.5, expected to occur in 2023.

One action under FSIP1 Recommendation 9 remains in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 10 – Community understanding of roles and responsibilities

The Phase 1 report found that more could be done to ensure the Victorian community understood its own roles and responsibilities before, during, and after emergencies, along with those of the emergency management sector.

IGEM recommended that EMV:

- provides clear guidance on the emergency management roles and responsibilities of individuals, communities, the private sector, responder agencies and government
- develops and implements a communications strategy to ensure that roles and responsibilities are understood.

The SEMP, first released in September 2020 and updated in October 2021, defines the concept of shared responsibility for emergency management and sets out the roles and responsibilities of individuals, households, sector agencies, businesses, and community groups.

IGEM notes that the actions in response to Recommendation 10 do not specify the development and implementation of a new communications strategy. However, IGEM acknowledges that the government continues to invest in a range of communication strategies to build understanding of what individuals, households and communities can do to mitigate emergency risk (FSIP1 Action 10.5).

The sector also continues to strengthen partnerships with the private sector (FSIP1 Action 10.4) and promote shared responsibility through regional and municipal emergency management planning processes (FSIP1 Action 10.2).

In early 2022 EMV commenced the Emergency Management Plan Exercising Project 2022–23 to test different high-impact, plausible emergency scenarios with the sector and Victorian communities (FSIP1 Action 10.3).

Four actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 10 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 11 – Evacuation

The Phase 1 report found that information in evacuation guidance documents was considered and comprehensive. However, the report identified instances of dissatisfaction among community members around evacuation during the 2019–20 fires, including in relation to traffic management points. The most common frustration was a lack of adequate information and communication about road access.

To address this IGEM recommended that Victoria Police (VicPol), working with the sector and the community, review and enhance its evacuation plans and processes.

VicPol has now completed its program of work in response to Recommendation 11, including in 2021–22:

- conducting three evacuation exercises with sector partners and community members, to test, review and enhance evacuation policies and procedures (FSIP1 Action 11.8).
- establishing a pre-summer season interagency briefing program with the Bureau of Meteorology, fire agencies and land managers to better identify and understand emergency risks (FSIP1 Action 11.9).
- training additional personnel to undertake emergency evacuation and traffic management roles (FSIP1 Action 11.11).

EMV also leads two actions in response to Recommendation 11 including the:

- review of Victoria’s State of Disaster legislation to ensure that existing powers in relation to evacuation are adequate for different emergency scenarios. The review is now planned for completion by June 2023 (FSIP1 Action 11.1).
- expanded use of modelling tools to improve evacuation decision-making processes – an initial trial of a new evacuation simulation tool is now complete (FSIP1 Action 11.12).

One action under FSIP1 Recommendation 11 remains in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 12 – Regional tier of control

The Phase 1 report identified some confusion among stakeholders on roles and responsibilities at the regional tier of control. Some considered that the regional tier replicated many of the oversight and coordination functions provided at the state tier of control. The Phase 1 report also found that the regional tier of control was underutilised during the 2019–20 fires.

To address these issues, IGEM recommended that EMV review and update the arrangements for all tiers of control and ensure that the arrangements are exercised.

The inaugural SEMP developed in the wake of the fires incorporated command and control arrangement flexibility to enable a more agile response to emergencies. EMV led a sector review of the SEMP and published a revised version in October 2021, communicating the changes to sector personnel. The revised SEMP makes further refinements to control arrangements along with various other updates including in response to IGEM’s Phase 2 report (FSIP1 Actions 12.3 and 12.7).

Regional tier arrangements were reinforced through the publication of Victoria’s inaugural Regional Emergency Management Plans (REMPs) in November 2020. Work is ongoing to review and update the state’s existing Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) to ensure their consistency with higher-tier plans (FSIP1 Action 12.4).

The Emergency Management Plan Exercising Project 2022–23 led by EMV has commenced, testing control arrangements and other system components through high-impact, plausible emergency scenarios. The project builds on SEMP and REMP scenario testing undertaken in mid-2021 and has a focus on community outcomes (FSIP1 Action 12.3). IGEM acknowledges that other exercises conducted by the sector also provide scope for the ongoing testing of control arrangements at all tiers.

EMV is also leading work to improve community understanding of emergency management arrangements under FSIP1 Action 12.6.

Three actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 12 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 13 – Incident tier of control

The Phase 1 report found that the inconsistent application of incident management practices during the fires led to difficulties confirming incident objectives and priorities. The report also identified variability in how incident controllers worked with incident management teams and support agencies.

To address these issues, IGEM recommended that EMV reviews and updates shift roster and handover processes and provide guidance and training in their application.

To support consistency, EMV developed new handover and action register templates for use during emergency events to accompany a training module on effective handovers developed in 2021 (FSIP1 Actions 13.1 and 13.2).

The LRAP developed by EMV and the sector also supports the ability of incident management team personnel to effectively apply incident management practices in environments of increasing complexity (FSIP1 Action 13.5). This initiative also forms an important part of the government's response to 10YOR Recommendation 4 on capability development.

EMV continues to identify learnings in relation to handovers, rostering and incident action planning through its Real Time Monitoring and Evaluation (RTM&E) of emergency events. In its next progress report IGEM intends to provide an update on any improvements made to handover, rostering and incident action planning processes stemming from RTM&E activities.

Four actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 13 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 14 – Shift rostering and fatigue and safety management

The Phase 1 report found that the 2019–20 fires seriously strained sector capacity and capability, with implications for fatigue management and the occupational health and safety of emergency management personnel.

IGEM recommended that a new system be developed to manage personnel and asset deployments, with due consideration of the health and wellbeing needs of personnel.

EMV has undertaken a range of activity in response to FSIP1 Recommendation 14, including:

- prioritising safety and fatigue as the theme of the 2021–22 pre-season preparedness briefings (FSIP1 Action 14.3).
- developing a software system to provide an aggregated view of health and safety incidents, enabling the identification and analysis of trends across agencies. IGEM understands the system remains in the testing phase (FSIP1 Action 14.5).
- completing research into interstate and international rostering and resourcing management arrangements to identify potential improvements or alternative models to the current Victorian arrangements (FSIP1 Action 14.6).

IGEM understands that sector guidelines to optimise deployment, service delivery and employee health and wellbeing (FSIP1 Action 14.4) may form part of the ongoing development of a contemporary emergency management operating model for Victoria in response to 10YOR Recommendation 4.

Two actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 14 were closed with no further activity planned, while two actions remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 15 – Emergency management capacity

The Phase 1 report found that the severity and extended duration of the 2019–20 fires placed significant strain on the sector's capacity, including its surge capacity. The presence of fires in other jurisdictions and the need to retain adequate resources elsewhere in Victoria affected the availability of resources for deployment to the eastern part of the state. IGEM also observed a lack of collective understanding of current and future capacity requirements across the sector.

IGEM recommended that EMV and the sector develop a capacity model that considers career and volunteer personnel requirements, surge requirements, emergency risks and climate scenarios.

In response to this recommendation EMV plans to design a capability model as part of the development of a contemporary emergency management operating model for Victoria (FSIP1 Action 15.8). EMV is currently leading a review of the existing emergency management operating model in response to 10YOR Recommendation 4, with proposals for post-review implementation currently under development and subject to future consideration by government. IGEM understands that there is scope for a capability model as per FSIP1 Action 15.8 to be included in the proposals.

IGEM notes that FSIP1 Action 15.8 focuses on capability rather than capacity however appreciates that the two are interdependent and will need to be considered in tandem as this work progresses.

Departments and agencies have also undertaken other work in response to FSIP1 Recommendation 15:

- EMV and the sector plan to complete capability assessments for the 21 Victorian Preparedness Framework core capabilities, with the results available to inform future capacity requirements. The first four assessments are currently being progressed (FSIP1 Action 15.2).
- to inform future capacity requirements, EMV is working with DELWP and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to review emergency risks for a range of hazard types under various climate scenarios (FSIP1 Action 15.10).
- the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) has now completed the Councils and Emergencies project, including an assessment of local government emergency management capability and capacity (FSIP1 Action 15.3). Priority actions identified during the project to address capability and capacity gaps are included in the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2022–25 for future implementation.

The LRAP developed in response to 10YOR Recommendation 4 also supports the completion of FSIP1 Action 15.5.

Three actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 15 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 16 – Cross-border interoperability

The Phase 1 report found that opportunities existed at state, national and international levels to continue to improve interoperability.

IGEM recommended that EMV and the sector work with New South Wales and South Australia to identify and address key cross-border operational and resource management issues to improve interoperability and maximise capability and capacity during cross-border emergencies.

In 2021–22 EMV led work to complete three actions by:

- working with DJPR to define the roles and responsibilities of Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner which EMV will incorporate as appropriate in the next iteration of the Victorian SEMP (FSIP1 Action 16.4).
- leading the implementation of the new nationally consistent Australian Warning System (AWS) and Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) in Victoria to ensure cohesive and consistent warnings and advice messages are broadcast along borders (FSIP1 Action 16.2).
- strengthening the interests of Victoria through the Emergency Management Commissioner's representation on the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee in relation to the Arrangement for Interstate Assistance (FSIP1 Action 16.5).

EMV continues to progress work on other activity under this recommendation including:

- developing a new role of Cross Border Emergency Management Liaison Officer to assist incident management teams in neighbouring jurisdictions (FSIP1 Action 16.3).
- developing a Cross Border Emergency Management Framework containing three levels of new agreements including mutual aid agreements (FSIP1 Action 16.8).

Four actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 16 remain in progress.

FSIP1 Recommendation 17 – Vulnerable communities

The Phase 1 report found that the methods used to assist vulnerable people to access and understand emergency information were limited, and that tourists might face greater risk in an emergency due to an absence of local knowledge.

IGEM recommended that EMV develops and implements processes to ensure greater dissemination and improved understanding of information to all Victorians and tourists in an emergency.

In 2021–22 EMV completed one action under this recommendation, updating the Victorian warning protocol (now known as the Victorian Warning Arrangements) in August 2021 and Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) 4.01 – Public Information and Warnings in October 2021 and developing the new JSOP 4.02 which sets out guidelines on disseminating public information and warnings during the response to and recovery from Class 2 emergencies.

A number of actions under this recommendation remain in progress:

- EMV has progressed work on the VicEmergency Uplift project that will support the VicEmergency app and the accompanying website to better accommodate the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities (FSIP1 Action 17.1). This action is now due to be completed in June 2023.
- DJPR is partnering with the Australian Government and other stakeholders such as Optus, Telstra, and TPG to strengthen telecommunications resilience in socially and geographically isolated communities in bushfire and disaster-prone areas (FSIP1 Action 17.5). The range of resilience improvements includes permanent on-site generators, transportable generators, bushfire hardening, and batteries. As of August 2022, the installation of all 344 Victorian satellite community Wi-Fi facility sites had been resolved.
- DoT has progressed work to update the VicTraffic app to inform users of the impacts on the road network due to emergencies (FSIP1 Action 17.6). DoT now expects this action to be completed by June 2024.

Five actions under FSIP1 Recommendation 17 remain in progress.

Actions placed 'on hold' in 2022

In June 2022 the State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) approved revisions to the implementation plan. The revisions include seven actions¹ that no longer have specified delivery dates as they are unable to be progressed without dedicated funding. IGEM considers these actions to be 'on hold' and will continue to monitor their status.

Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season: Phase 2 – Progress and effectiveness of Victoria's immediate relief and recovery arrangements report (Phase 2 report)

IGEM provided its Phase 2 report to the Minister for Emergency Services on 30 July 2021 which concluded the conduct of the independent Inquiry. On 14 October 2021 the report was tabled in Parliament and the Victorian Government responded, supporting all 15 recommendations.

Section 2.4 of this report describes the government's progress in developing an implementation statement establishing the strategic direction it will take to implement all recommendations from IGEM's Phase 2 report. This section also provides a brief update on the establishment of a dedicated recovery entity in response to Recommendation 13 of the Phase 2 report.

¹ In June 2022, SCRC provided approval for the following actions to no longer have specified delivery dates as progression of these actions is dependent on the availability of dedicated funding: 10YOR Actions 3.3, 4.2, 4.6 and 4.7, and FSIP1 Actions 11.12, 15.8 and 17.4. Two of these actions – 10YOR Action 3.3 and FSIP1 Action 11.12 were subsequently progressed and reported as complete in this report.

1 Introduction

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) was established in 2014 to provide assurance to the Victorian Government and the community regarding Victoria's emergency management arrangements, and to foster their continuous improvement. The Inspector-General is a Governor in Council appointment under the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (EM Act 2013).

In April 2021 the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services wrote to IGEM requesting² that it report by November each year on the work of departments and agencies in implementing the actions it committed to in response to two IGEM reports:

- *Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector* (10 Year Review)
- *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 1 – Community and sector preparedness for and response to the 2019–20 fire season* (Phase 1 report)

This is IGEM's second progress report on implementation activity relating to these two reports.

Section 4 of this report provides an assessment of implementation progress for the period to July 2022 and key developments since then in relation to the 81 (of 139) actions remaining in progress following IGEM's 2021 progress report.

In October 2021 IGEM's *Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season – Phase 2 – Progress and effectiveness of Victoria's immediate relief and recovery arrangements report* (Phase 2 report) was publicly released. The government responded to the Phase 2 report in the same month accepting all of its 15 recommendations.

The State Crisis and Resilience Council (SCRC) endorsed an implementation statement in June 2022 outlining the government's approach to implementing all recommendations from the Phase 2 report. As of September 2022, the government had yet to approve the statement for public release. Therefore IGEM is unable to provide an update on implementation progress against the statement in this report.

Section 2.4 of this report does however provide a brief update on the establishment of a dedicated emergency recovery entity for Victoria in response to Recommendation 13. The planned establishment of Emergency Recovery Victoria is a cornerstone of government activity in response to the Phase 2 report.

IGEM provided this progress report to the Minister for Emergency Services (the minister) in October 2022 and requested that the minister approve its public release.

² Under section 64(1)(ca) of the EM Act 2013

2 Background

2.1 Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector

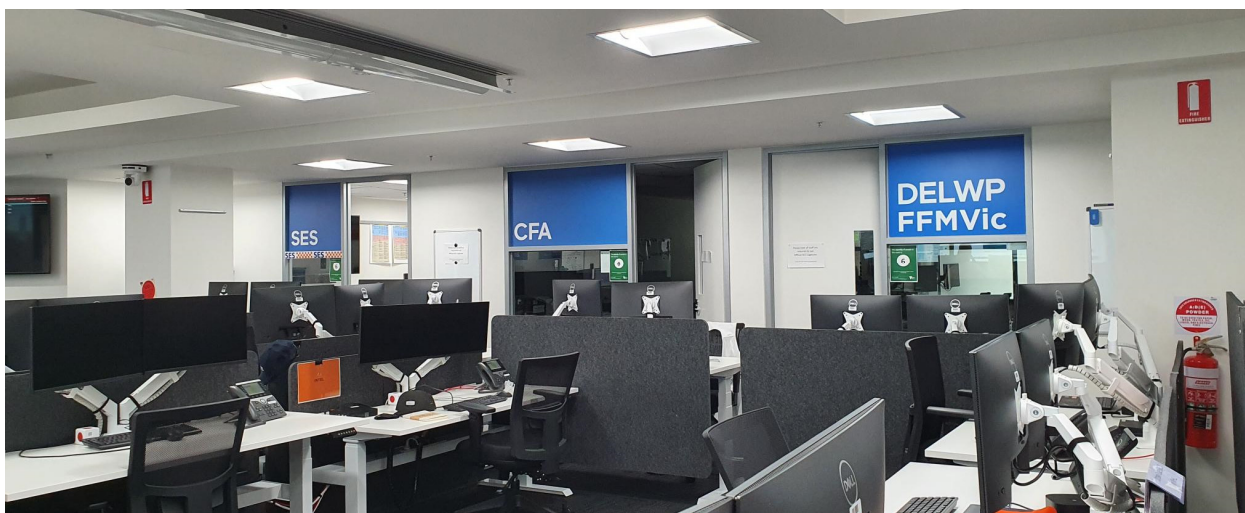
IGEM considered that the 10-year anniversary of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires presented an opportunity to examine whether the significant program of reforms introduced since 2009 are effective in supporting Victorians to become safer and more resilient.

Much of this reform has been guided by major commissions and inquiries including the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (2009–10) and the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry (2014–16).

IGEM found that many aspects of the sector had significantly improved since 2009, based on its in-depth examination of five key themes:

- governance
- capacity and capability
- community engagement and preparedness
- rebuilding and recovery
- safety and resilience.

IGEM's resulting report, *Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector*, was released by government in October 2020 and made five recommendations related to the critical areas of risk management, community preparedness, recovery, outcomes frameworks, and capability and capacity.



State Control Centre (Source: IGEM)

2.2 Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian Fire Season

On 14 January 2020 the Victorian Government announced IGEM would conduct an independent Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season.

About the fire season

During the 2019–20 fire season Victoria faced its most challenging bushfire emergency since the devastating 2009 bushfires, with a geographic scale not seen since 1939. Between November 2019 and February 2020, more than 1.5 million hectares of land were seared by fire in large parts of Victoria's North East, Gippsland, and Alpine regions.

Five people died, and some 313 primary residences and 145 non-primary residences were destroyed or damaged. Commercial properties and other buildings were also destroyed or damaged, along with community infrastructure, cultural heritage sites and environmental assets. The impacts on flora, fauna and waterways are still being assessed and experienced.

Many regional businesses, including hundreds not directly affected by the fires themselves, were impacted by the events of the fire season. Tourism was among the most affected industries. Agriculture, logistics, and small businesses across a range of sectors were also affected.

About the Inquiry

IGEM's Inquiry was conducted in two phases and concluded on 30 July 2021.

- **Phase 1** considered Victoria's preparedness for and response to the 2019–20 fires. The Phase 1 report was provided to the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services on 31 July 2020. It made 66 observations, 36 findings, and 17 recommendations.
- **Phase 2** considered the progress and effectiveness of the state's immediate relief and recovery arrangements in relation to the 2019–20 fire season. The Phase 2 report was provided to the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services on 30 July 2021. It made 48 observations, 111 findings, and 15 recommendations.

Many community members shared their views and experiences with the Inquiry by making a submission. The Inquiry reports are available at igem.vic.gov.au

2.3 10 Year Review and Phase 1 government response and implementation plans

On 14 October 2020 the Victorian Government responded to the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 report, accepting all 22 recommendations.³

Following the release of the government response, an interim Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) was established, co-chaired by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), to support development of implementation plans and provide oversight of their delivery.

Detailed implementation plans were released on 30 July 2021. The plans outlined 139 government actions in relation to the two reports, specified the lead department or agency responsible for implementing each action, and included the expected completion dates for some actions.⁴

In February 2022 government approved the IDC's closure and transferred responsibility for oversight of the delivery of the plans and any future adjustments to the SCRC. The SCRC was the authorising body for amendments to the implementation plan in October 2021 and June 2022.

³ The government response is available at emv.vic.gov.au/publications/gov-response-igem-review-10years-reform-and-2019-20-inquiry-phase1

⁴ The implementation plans are available at vic.gov.au/igem-inquiry-review-implementation-plans

In June 2022, SCRC approved the cessation of public progress reporting on delivery of the implementation plan via the Victorian Government website, given this process duplicates public progress reporting by IGEM on its website. SCRC endorsed that any future changes to scope or delivery dates for the actions to be made by relevant departments and agencies, in consultation with relevant ministers. Lead departments and agencies are expected to report to SCRC on key implementation risks and issues on an as needs basis.

Revisions to the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 implementation plan

October 2021

On 7 October 2021 SCRC endorsed an updated implementation plan which outlined changes to the scope and/or delivery timeframes of selected actions in light of the 2021–22 Victorian State Budget outcomes and the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and June 2021 extreme weather event.

June 2022

On 30 June 2022 SCRC approved amendments to delivery dates for 20 actions reflecting further delays from the impacts of budget outcomes and resourcing challenges due to emergencies. This included seven actions that will not be advanced without dedicated funding⁵. IGEM considers these actions to be 'on hold' and will continue to monitor the status of these actions.

IGEM's monitoring is based on the revised June 2022 implementation plan with any further revisions to the scope and delivery dates of actions subject to approval by relevant departments and agencies, in consultation with relevant ministers.

2.4 Phase 2 government response and implementation statement

In October 2021 the Victorian Government responded to the Phase 2 report by supporting all 15 recommendations.

On 30 June 2022 SCRC endorsed an implementation statement outlining the government's approach to implementing all recommendations from the Phase 2 report as part of its broader commitment to strategic relief and recovery reform.

IGEM has been provided with a final version of the statement however as of September 2022 the government had yet to approve the statement for public release. Therefore IGEM is unable to provide an update on implementation progress against the statement in this report.

Establishment of a dedicated recovery entity

Recommendation 13 from the Phase 2 report involves the establishment of dedicated recovery entity and underpins other Phase 2 implementation activity:

Recommendation 13

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Victorian Government establish a permanent and comprehensive entity dedicated to recovery management with the authority, capability, capacity and resourcing to coordinate the planning and delivery of recovery functions for all emergencies.

⁵ In June 2022, SCRC provided approval for the following actions to no longer have specified delivery dates as progression of these actions is dependent on the availability of dedicated funding: 10YOR Actions 3.3, 4.2, 4.6 and 4.7, and FSIP1 Actions 11.12, 15.8 and 17.4. Two of these actions - 10YOR Action 3.3 and FSIP1 Action 11.12 were subsequently progressed and reported as complete in this report.

The Phase 2 implementation statement references the government's response to Recommendation 13 which includes the establishment of the new entity Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV). ERV will operate as a standalone business unit of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) and will be a new, permanent, and comprehensive recovery entity. This action will entail Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) expanding its responsibilities and transition to ERV encompassing all emergencies across the state.

It is intended that ERV will:

- work closely with the recovery sector to help build stronger communities that are better prepared for, and recover faster from, emergencies
- be better integrated with the emergency management sector to ensure a seamless transition from response to recovery
- work with local government and communities to ensure they lead their own engagement processes, collectively determine their recovery priorities and plan how they will achieve them.

In May 2022 government approved the design and implementation plan for ERV. A DJCS Steering Group will guide the development and establishment of ERV and agency transition plans to address interim and final entity arrangements over a phased duration. A Working Group will also be established to support the activities of the Steering Group.

2.5 IGEM's implementation monitoring role

IGEM's implementation monitoring offers assurance to government and the community that lessons from emergencies contribute to sustainable improvements that make a difference for Victorian communities.

In April 2021 the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services requested that IGEM report by November each year on the work of departments and agencies in implementing the actions committed to in the government response and implementation plans under section 64(1)(ca) of the EM Act 2013. The request asked IGEM to consider any risks or delays to implementation progress and invited inclusion of assessment or commentary on the alignment of implementation with the intent of the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 report recommendations.

In October 2021 the Minister for Emergency Services requested that IGEM monitor and report on the implementation of Phase 2 recommendations, consistent with its monitoring of the implementation of Phase 1 actions.

IGEM will provide a progress update of remaining 10 Year Review and Phase 1 actions, as well as Phase 2 actions, in its next progress report.

For a full list of all recommendations and actions pertaining to the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 report, including actions reported as complete or closed in IGEM's 2021 progress report, refer to Appendix A.

3 Approach

IGEM monitors implementation by assessing progress against the actions set out in the implementation plan, taking into consideration any risks or delays to implementation progress.

IGEM may include in its progress summaries, commentary on the alignment of action implementation with the intent of recommendations in both the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 report.

3.1 Assurance approach

IGEM and the emergency management sector's assurance activities are guided by the *Assurance Framework for Emergency Management*.⁶ 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, such as being proactive, risk-based and reporting the results of assurance activities that is timely and can be easily understood by decision makers.

Limitations in assurance

Like all assurance providers, the level of assurance that IGEM can provide is limited by the quality and quantity of the available information, and by the scope of the assurance activity.

IGEM provides assurance on progress through assessing updates provided by departments and agencies and collecting and assessing evidence to substantiate those updates. IGEM seeks to reflect progress to the fullest extent possible based on evidence provided or that is publicly available.

At times, if evidence is unavailable, IGEM may be limited in its capacity to report on progress. If IGEM is unable to view supporting evidence, then it will report the progress as 'advised' by agencies. This represents a lower level of assurance.

⁶ igem.vic.gov.au/reports-and-publications/igem-reports/assurance-framework-for-emergency-management

3.2 Stakeholder engagement

Key stakeholders

Organisations with responsibility for implementing actions in this reporting period are:

- Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV)
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)
- Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)
- Department of Transport (DoT)
- Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)
- Victoria Police (VicPol).

In early 2022 IGEM wrote to organisations with lead implementation responsibilities, outlining timelines and confirming communication arrangements. It also offered to meet with nominated representatives to explain the implementation monitoring process and to provide guidance on evidence requirements. All organisations accepted this offer, meeting with IGEM to test their reporting approach, and share their progress and challenges.

In September 2022 IGEM provided lead departments and agencies with a draft of this report and incorporated their feedback into the final version.

Acknowledgement

IGEM acknowledges the collegiate and supportive manner in which its stakeholders have worked to respond to IGEM's information requests. At times information was provided to IGEM earlier than required, and several organisations engaged proactively to seek advice on how to improve the quality of their reporting. IGEM also appreciates the opportunities that stakeholders have provided over the course of the year to observe relevant emergency management exercises and various committee meetings. This commitment to transparency and continuous improvement is commended, particularly given the operational pressures faced by many organisations during these resource constrained times.

3.3 Information collection

In line with their independent assurance role, on 1 July 2022 the Inspector-General wrote to the heads of departments and agencies, formally requesting that they provide progress updates for actions they are leading, along with supporting documentation.

IGEM received responses from all lead departments and agencies, including supporting documentation such as policies, procedures, correspondence, reports, briefings and meeting records. All documents were stored securely and managed in accordance with IGEM's statutory obligations.⁷

IGEM also referred to a wide range of publicly available information in preparing this report, including relevant reports and webpages, as well as information collected through other IGEM assurance activities including direct observation of emergency management exercises, committees and forums.

⁷ These include the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, the confidentiality requirements of section 72 of the *EM Act 2013*, and the requirements of other records management legislation and policies.

3.4 Analysis and reporting

When assessing the progress of actions IGEM considers:

- timeframes for the action, including revised timeframes, delays and progress on key milestones
- the contribution of the reported activity to the action it supports
- evidence available to support the reported activity.

IGEM assigns a status and finding to each action based on a number of factors including progress against timeframes (if applicable) and evidence of recent implementation activity.

Table 1 describes the status that IGEM assigns for each action. Findings provide more detailed information on the progress of actions.

Table 1: Implementation status

STATUS	DESCRIPTION
Complete	Action has been implemented
Closed	Action has not been fully implemented and no further activity is planned
In progress	Action is being implemented and IGEM will continue to monitor and report on its status in future reports
Yet to commence	Implementation has not started and IGEM provides no progress summary in this report

4 Implementation progress

4.1 Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector

The implementation plan sets out 26 actions that relate to the five recommendations made in IGEM's 10 Year Review.

The actions are grouped numerically under the following themes:

- knowledge and learning
- risk management arrangements
- community preparedness
- capability development
- recovery reform.

For a full list of all recommendations and actions pertaining to the 10 Year Review, including actions reported as complete or closed in IGEM's 2021 progress report, refer to Appendix A.

4.1.1 Knowledge and learning

In its 10 Year Review, IGEM acknowledged that there was a strong commitment to continuous improvement across the sector. Despite this commitment, IGEM found that it was difficult to use the information collected to develop an understanding of sector-wide change.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV lead the development of a sector-wide outcomes framework and provide guidance to the sector on how to incorporate outcomes and measures in its business-as-usual activities.

10YOR Recommendation 1

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria, in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector:

- a) develops and implements a sector-wide outcomes framework that aligns to the strategic and operational elements of all phases of emergency management. The framework must:
 - develop emergency management outcomes that reflect the Victorian whole-of-government outcomes
 - identify outcome measures and associated indicators
- b) provides guidance and support for the sector on how to incorporate emergency management outcomes and measures in emergency management planning, policy development, decision-making and assurance activities.

Table 2: Status of knowledge and learning actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING				
10YOR 1.3	EMV will consult and collaborate with relevant agencies to develop a sector-wide outcomes framework to measure the effectiveness of the emergency management sector in supporting resilient communities and providing reliable, integrated and timely services. This framework will be finalised in the 2021–22 financial year.	November 2021 July 2022 (revised)	Complete	EMV

10YOR 1.3. EMV will consult and collaborate with relevant agencies to develop a sector-wide outcomes framework to measure the effectiveness of the emergency management sector in supporting resilient communities and providing reliable, integrated and timely services. This framework will be finalised in the 2021–22 financial year.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted initial scoping work on a sector-wide outcomes framework as one of four projects under the Emergency Management Reform Program led by EMV.

On 7 October 2021 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of June 2022 due to budget and resourcing considerations.

EMV and sector partners have since worked together to finalise the Victorian Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Framework which was endorsed by the Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet on 25 July 2022.

The framework describes the high-level outcomes the sector seeks to achieve for communities before, during and after an emergency, supporting accountability and performance management. It also articulates the desired change from the reform agenda over the next six years and contains:

- the sector's shared vision for safer and more resilient communities
- an impact statement to describe the benefits for individuals and communities
- domains describing the areas to be delivered against
- outcomes for each domain that describe what success looks like for individuals, communities, business and the emergency management sector
- outcome indicators to describe what needs to change to achieve the outcomes.

Subject to funding and resourcing, EMV also plans to develop an outcomes measurement strategy to provide outcome measures, identify barriers and enablers to data collection, and support baseline and future reporting against the framework.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.1.2 Risk management arrangements

IGEM's 10 Year Review found that the statewide risk assessment was outdated as it did not reflect many recent changes in the community and the changing risk profile of Victoria.

IGEM noted that understanding current or future capability and capacity gaps, in combination with hazards and their extensive consequences, would provide a well-informed approach to risk assessment in Victoria.

IGEM recommended that EMV update the State Emergency Risk Assessment and provide the sector with guidance on how to incorporate it in emergency management activities.

10YOR Recommendation 2

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector:

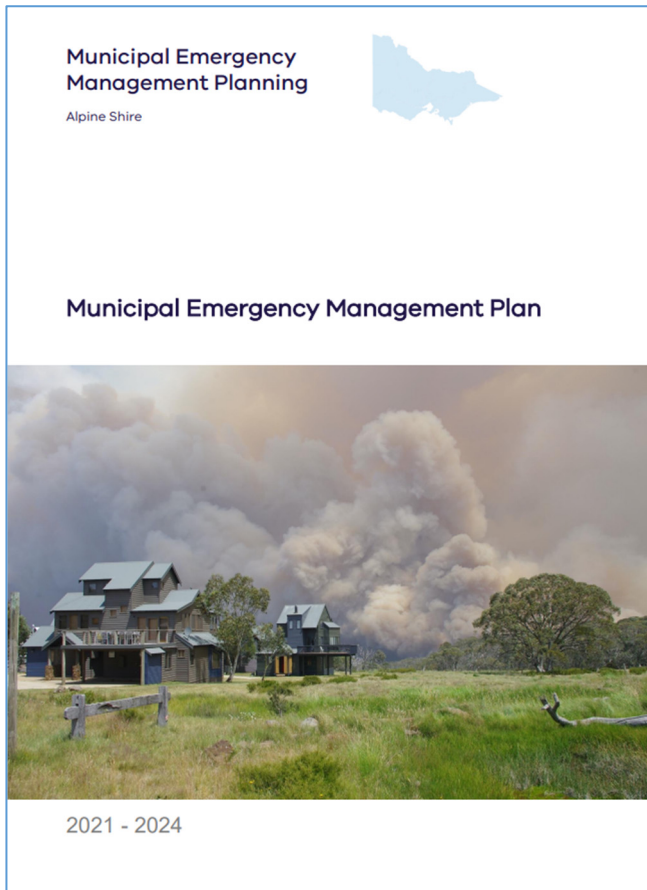
- a) updates the 2012–13 State Emergency Risk Assessment to include strategic and operational elements of emergency management. This should consider:
 - the place-based risk assessment developed through the community emergency risk assessment process
 - consequence management capability across the sector
 - existing risk models for natural and human-induced hazards.
- b) provides guidance and support for the sector on how to incorporate the updated risk assessment in emergency management planning, policy development, decision-making and assurance activities.

Table 3: Status of risk management arrangements actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS				
10YOR 2.5	By December 2023, as part of the three-year rolling program of assurance, the Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) will be revised by local government and community representatives, using existing risk assessment processes that align with the national risk assessment guidelines and consider state and regional assessments.	December 2023	In progress	EMV
10YOR 2.6	In 2021, EMV will lead the development of a contemporary and systemic approach to identifying and mitigating risk across Victoria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach will consider key drivers of change and make use of predictive forecasting tools to inform data analytics and intelligence. • It will establish partnerships with other jurisdictions and research organisations to establish and embed world-leading practice for risk assessment and the technological interdependence of systems and services. 	December 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	EMV

10YOR 2.5. By December 2023, as part of the three-year rolling program of assurance, the Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) will be revised by local government and community representatives, using existing risk assessment processes that align with the national risk assessment guidelines and consider state and regional assessments.

Under Victoria's emergency management planning arrangements, Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPCs)⁸ are required to update their existing Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) every three years.



Source: Alpine Shire Council

Current MEMPs, including their sub-plans, are required to be available via council and alpine resort management board websites. A centralised library of links is also maintained on EMV's website at emv.vic.gov.au/index.php/responsibilities/emergency-management-planning/memps

Each MEMP includes arrangements for emergency mitigation, response, and recovery that contextualise the general arrangements in the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and identifies emergency management roles and responsibilities at the municipal level.

MEMPs are prepared with consideration to their municipal-level assessment of emergency risk, which commonly uses the all-hazards Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) tool. CERA aims to identify, mitigate and reduce risk within the community following the Australian Standard for Risk Management (ISO 31000)⁹.

Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees (REMPCs) are responsible for approving their region's MEMPs and MEMP sub-plans. The Regional Collaboration Group has developed a centralised database of all MEMP approval dates with a total of 28 MEMPs having been approved since the new planning arrangements came into effect in December 2020. The remaining MEMPs will be progressively reviewed and updated by 1 December 2023 in accordance with their existing three-year review cycles, including ensuring consistency with the SEMP and the relevant Regional Emergency Management Plans (REMPs).

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

⁸ MEMPC core membership includes the council or alpine resort management board, Victoria Police, the Country Fire Authority and/or Fire Rescue Victoria (depending on the geographic footprint), Ambulance Victoria, Victoria State Emergency Service, Australian Red Cross and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. MEMPCs also require at least one additional recovery representative, one community representative, and one other representative (for example, an industry representative).

⁹ For more information refer to ses.vic.gov.au/about-us/emergency-management-training/community-emergency-risk-assessment-cera

10YOR 2.6. In 2021, EMV will lead the development of a contemporary and systemic approach to identifying and mitigating risk across Victoria:

- **This approach will consider key drivers of change and make use of predictive forecasting tools to inform data analytics and intelligence.**
- **It will establish partnerships with other jurisdictions and research organisations to establish and embed world-leading practice for risk assessment and the technological interdependence of systems and services.**

Victorian Emergency Risk Assessment

EMV is addressing this action through the 2022–23 Victorian Emergency Risk Assessment (VERA) Project, which will update the current state emergency risk assessment in the *Emergency Risks in Victoria* report (2020).

EMV updated the Emergency Management Planning Reform IDC on the project on 15 March 2022 and subsequently circulated the project concept brief to State Emergency Management Planning Committee (SEMPC) members.

In June 2022 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of June 2023 due to previous resource and funding constraints. EMV has since secured funding to support Phase 1 of the project through the National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Phase 1 of the project aims to:

- develop a methodology based on Australian and international best practice using qualitative and quantitative data
- develop a repeatable process for emergency risk assessments and enable targeted reviews of specific emergency risks
- incorporate climate change modelling to plan for future emergency risks, in coordination with DELWP and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

The project will begin by focusing on emergency risk assessments at the municipal level from the CERA results, and recent Regional Emergency Risk Assessments (RERA), as well as previously identified risks at the state level.

EMV is establishing the VERA Project Working Group to progress this work and intends to circulate a Terms of Reference to SEMPC for feedback at its September 2022 meeting.

Depending on funding availability, **Phase 2** of the project aims to improve access to emergency risk data through the creation of an interactive online platform for state, regional and municipal level data.

Emergency Management Strategic Outlook

EMV also produces an Emergency Management Strategic Outlook every six months on strategic considerations that are likely to impact the sector. The analysis is based on consequence management methodology and intelligence assessments.

The April–September 2022 outlook expands the focus beyond COVID-19 pandemic risk to take an all-hazards approach.

Regional Emergency Risk Assessment

In July 2021 EMV commenced the Regional Emergency Risk Assessment Project to develop a regional level risk assessment methodology and facilitate assessments of selected emergency risks.

EMV engaged a consultant to conduct 16 risk assessment workshops between September and November 2021 across all eight of Victoria's emergency management regions. In December 2021 the consultant provided EMV with the assessment results and a summary report.

The assessments will be used by REMPCs to inform future versions of their REMP and identify any specific sub-plans and mitigation, response and recovery actions needed at the regional level.

Municipal Emergency Risk Assessment

Refer to 10YOR Action 2.5 for information on the updating of MEMPs using existing risk assessment processes.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by SCRC.

4.1.3 Community preparedness

In its 10 Year Review, IGEM noted that there had been some major changes in the way the sector engaged with the community to encourage emergency preparedness.

While there had been multiple positive changes, IGEM recognised that the amount of information could be overwhelming for community members – especially for vulnerable and diverse communities.

IGEM also noted that the volume of information provided through preparedness programs, emergency information and warnings, and other community engagement initiatives was not well-coordinated across the sector.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV develops a clear and consistent preparedness strategy relevant to all emergencies.

10YOR Recommendation 3

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector – develop and promote a preparedness strategy that:

- is relevant to all emergencies
- is aligned with existing community resilience initiatives
- includes a clear, consistent and accessible preparedness message
- builds on the community preparedness work of the Australian Red Cross
- considers leading practice from other jurisdictions.

IGEM notes that the actions in response to 10YOR Recommendation 3 do not specify the development and promotion of a new preparedness strategy. However, EMV has led a range of other activity related to community preparedness that is now complete.

Table 4: Status of community preparedness actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS				
10YOR 3.3	EMV will work with the sector to review existing community resilience and preparedness strategies and initiatives and measure their effectiveness. The review will inform a future performance framework aligned with sector outcomes developed through the response to the Review's sector-wide outcomes.	June 2021 June 2022 (revised)	Complete	EMV

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
10YOR 3.4	As part of this review, EMV and sector partners will consider integrating and building on the community preparedness work of the Australian Red Cross and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (or revised national policy) and exploring best practice from other national and international jurisdictions.	June 2021 June 2022 (revised)	Complete	EMV
10YOR 3.5	EMV will work with the sector in partnership with communities to review the Victorian Preparedness Goal by June 2022. The updated and refreshed Victorian Preparedness Goal will further promote the principles of shared responsibility and self-reliance and will be informed in part by the outcomes of the review's risk assessment recommendation. It will also build community awareness of the capability, capacity and resilience required in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.	June 2022 August 2022 (revised)	Complete	EMV

10YOR 3.3. EMV will work with the sector to review existing community resilience and preparedness strategies and initiatives and measure their effectiveness. The review will inform a future performance framework aligned with sector outcomes developed through the response to the Review's sector-wide outcomes.

On 7 October 2021 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of June 2022 due to resource constraints.

EMV has addressed this action through the 'Enhancing strategies and initiatives to improve community safety and resilience' project.

EMV engaged consultants to analyse the Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management (2017) and the Community Based Emergency Management Overview (2016) alongside selected national and international community resilience and preparedness strategies and initiatives. The consultants interviewed key sector stakeholders to underpin the analysis.

The consultants identified limited evidence of the effectiveness of existing strategies and initiatives in building community safety and resilience. They recommended the development of an enhanced model and approach to better understand, enable and demonstrate changes in community resilience, based on relevant, easy to collect and measurable resilience indicators.

The progress summary for 10YOR Action 1.3 of this report provides an update on the development of the Sector Outcomes Framework, which includes outcomes and proposed outcomes indicators for individuals, communities, businesses and the emergency management sector.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

10YOR 3.4. As part of this review, EMV and sector partners will consider integrating and building on the community preparedness work of the Australian Red Cross and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (or revised national policy) and exploring best practice from other national and international jurisdictions.

On 7 October 2021 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of June 2022 due to resource constraints.

EMV has addressed this action through the 'Understanding community safety and resilience from different perspectives' project.

EMV engaged consultants to identify examples of leading resilience practice across national and international jurisdictions. The examples identified included three Australian Red Cross projects.

The consultants identified alignment between the examples and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (2018) priorities:

- understand disaster risk
- accountable decisions
- enhance investment
- governance, ownership and responsibility.

The project findings will inform the development of an improved community resilience approach and model, the need for which was identified through 10YOR Action 3.3.

Further information on the community preparedness and disaster resilience work of the Australian Red Cross is available at redcross.org.au/emergencies/

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

10YOR 3.5. EMV will work with the sector in partnership with communities to review the Victorian Preparedness Goal by June 2022. The updated and refreshed Victorian Preparedness Goal will further promote the principles of shared responsibility and self-reliance and will be informed in part by the outcomes of the review's risk assessment recommendation. It will also build community awareness of the capability, capacity and resilience required in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

The contents of the Victorian Preparedness Goal have been consolidated into the Victorian Preparedness Framework as part of a review of both documents led by EMV. For more information on this process refer to the progress summary for 10YOR Action 4.8.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.1.4 Capability development

IGEM's 10 Year Review acknowledged the sector's efforts to undertake multiple needs analyses of capability. However, IGEM found that some of this work had stalled and did not provide a comprehensive understanding of capability needs across the sector.

IGEM noted that although a greater number of sector organisations had access to training and exercising opportunities, this access did not always align with needs.

IGEM recommended that EMV streamlines existing work underway to deliver a comprehensive sector-wide capability strategy for emergency management personnel.

10YOR Recommendation 4

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria streamlines the existing suite of work underway to identify gaps in the sector's capability and capacity to deliver a comprehensive sector-wide capability development strategy for operational and strategic personnel – including volunteers – that considers:

- a) all capabilities identified through the *Victorian Preparedness Framework* and additional strategic emergency management capabilities
- b) all capability development mechanisms (including accreditation, work-based learning, training and exercising).

Table 5: Status of capability development actions reported as 'in progress' or 'yet to commence' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT				
10YOR 4.2	EMV will lead a strategic review of Victoria's network of Incident Control Centres and Regional Control Centres, focusing on capacity and resourcing to ensure a sustainable, effective model that is able to respond to large, concurrent and prolonged events. This includes a commitment by the Victorian Government of \$1.762 million to deliver a strategic review by May 2021.	May 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	EMV
10YOR 4.3	EMV will work with the sector to review the emergency management operating model and will provide a report to the Victorian Government by the end of 2021 that will identify options for a future emergency management operating model, including a recommended approach. The report will consider the use, scope and functionality of current assets, systems, processes and functions in line with the Victorian Preparedness Framework.	December 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	EMV
10YOR 4.4	EMV will review the current training and accreditation program for incident management personnel, to inform an action plan that enables the building and sustainment of the sectors capability requirements into the future.	June 2022	Complete	EMV
10YOR 4.5	Identify resourcing, training and professional development needs to enhance leadership and operations managed by the three tiers of command and control within the state's emergency management arrangements. This will include training and development needed to support ongoing interoperability and resource integration across the sector.	June 2022	Complete	EMV
10YOR 4.6	By June 2022, EMV will prepare a detailed implementation plan to enact the Victorian Government's preferred emergency management operating model.	June 2022 June 2023 (revised)	Yet to commence	EMV

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
10YOR 4.7	The future operating model will support and inform the development of a fit for purpose incident management platform identified in response to Recommendation 14 of the Inquiry Phase 1 report.	June 2022 June 2023 (revised)	Yet to commence	EMV
10YOR 4.8	EMV will work with the sector to review and enhance the Victorian Preparedness Framework to ensure it is fit for purpose and identifies the needs of the sector. The review will consider learnings from the public health response to coronavirus (COVID-19) and recent bushfire seasons. This process will determine the service offering of the sector and potential measures to address identified gaps.	December 2021 August 2022 (revised)	Complete	EMV

10YOR 4.2. EMV will lead a strategic review of Victoria’s network of Incident Control Centres and Regional Control Centres, focusing on capacity and resourcing to ensure a sustainable, effective model that is able to respond to large, concurrent and prolonged events. This includes a commitment by the Victorian Government of \$1.762 million to deliver a strategic review by May 2021.

As part of the Emergency Management Operating Model Review (refer to 10YOR Action 4.3), EMV commissioned a consultation report (November 2021) including analysis, findings and proposals on Victoria’s network of control centres, including Incident Control Centres (ICCs) and Regional Control Centres (RCCs).

The consultation report proposed that the sector rationalise and modernise control centres to reflect a flexible all-hazards approach. Drawing on new data and previous network reviews dating back to 2013, the report found appetite across the sector for this change and suggested that the location of control centres be determined through an optimisation exercise.



Multi-agency exercise at Kangaroo Ground ICC (Source: CFA)

Specific proposals for implementation arising from the Operating Model Review remain under development and are subject to future consideration and approval by government. Refer to Action 10YOR Action 4.3 for more information on this process.

EMV's Chief Executive has approved a revised due date for this action of June 2023.

EMV advised that the \$1.762 million (m) funding commitment mentioned in this action is for the overall Operating Model Review.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by EMV's Chief Executive.

10YOR 4.3. EMV will work with the sector to review the emergency management operating model and will provide a report to the Victorian Government by the end of 2021 that will identify options for a future emergency management operating model, including a recommended approach. The report will consider the use, scope and functionality of current assets, systems, processes and functions in line with the Victorian Preparedness Framework.

On 30 June 2022 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action to December 2022 to enable further sector consultation. EMV's Chief Executive Officer has approved a further revised due date for this action of June 2023.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted initial work on an Operating Model Review as one of four projects under the Emergency Management Reform Program led by EMV.

Since then, EMV engaged consultants to produce an Emergency Management Operating Model Review Consultation Report (November 2021). The consultation report includes findings and proposals on various aspects of Victoria's emergency management operating model.

EMV presented stakeholder feedback on the consultation report's findings and proposals to SCRC on 17 February 2022, in support of the premise that a more secure, reliable, and efficient model is required for Victoria's core emergency management workforce.

Following consultation with departmental secretaries and agency heads, EMV provided a further update to SCRC on 30 June 2022. EMV plans to engage stakeholders further and deliver a position paper to SCRC in October 2022 identifying the Operating Model Review proposals to be progressed.

Finding

IGEM considers this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting revisions to due dates were approved by SCRC and EMV's Chief Executive.

10YOR 4.4. EMV will review the current training and accreditation program for incident management personnel, to inform an action plan that enables the building and sustainment of the sectors capability requirements into the future.

10YOR 4.5. Identify resourcing, training and professional development needs to enhance leadership and operations managed by the three tiers of command and control within the state's emergency management arrangements. This will include training and development needed to support ongoing interoperability and resource integration across the sector.

To deliver these actions, EMV engaged consultants to:

- review the state's Incident Management Team (IMT) training and accreditation system and produce a report with findings and recommendations (August 2021)
- develop a Training and Development Masterplan that provides a strategic and consistent approach to training and professional development for emergency management personnel (November 2021).

Both the IMT review and the Training and Development Masterplan draw on consultation conducted with agencies during 2021. The Emergency Management Capability and Capacity Steering Committee (EMCCSC) provides oversight of the project.

During 2022 EMV consolidated the IMT review and the Training and Development Masterplan into a Learning Reform Action Plan (LRAP). To develop the LRAP, in March 2022 EMV held workshops with subject matter experts to identify and prioritise training deliverables. Further workshops were held in May 2022 to align training courses with emergency management roles.

The LRAP aims to increase skills and build capability across the emergency management sector, focusing on five key areas:

- course development
- data sharing
- exercise and simulation delivery
- leadership, coaching and mentoring development
- Victorian Emergency Management Institute¹⁰ enhancements.

EMCCSC members provided feedback on the LRAP and its accompanying communications and engagement plan in June 2022. Following the consideration of this feedback, the LRAP and communications and engagement plan were both endorsed by EMCCSC at its September 2022 meeting. EMV plans to coordinate monthly updates to the EMCCSC on the progress of work completed under the LRAP.

IMT resourcing is being considered as part of the Emergency Management Operating Model Review led by EMV. Refer to 10YOR Action 4.3 for more information.

Finding

IGEM considers that these actions have been implemented.

10YOR 4.8. EMV will work with the sector to review and enhance the Victorian Preparedness Framework to ensure it is fit for purpose and identifies the needs of the sector. The review will consider learnings from the public health response to coronavirus (COVID-19) and recent bushfire seasons. This process will determine the service offering of the sector and potential measures to address identified gaps.

In June 2022 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of December 2022 to allow EMV time for further sector consultation.

¹⁰ For more information refer to emv.vic.gov.au/VEMI

The Victorian Preparedness Framework

The Victorian Preparedness Framework (VPF) – first published in 2017 and updated in 2018 – identifies and describes 21 core capabilities and the related critical tasks required to manage emergencies in Victoria. These core capabilities and critical tasks set the foundation for how the State prepares for, responds to, and recovers from emergencies. The VPF is available at emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/emergency-management-capability-in-victoria/victorian-preparedness-framework

Review of the Victorian Preparedness Framework

EMV led sector and community reviews of the VPF during 2021–22 to deliver this action.

Members of EMCCSC agreed at its 27 January 2022 meeting that 12 core capabilities be deemed in scope for the review based on input from relevant subject matter experts and capability coordinators from the Emergency Management Capability and Capacity project.

To progress the review, EMV undertook targeted consultation with relevant agencies and provided a consultation draft VPF to sector stakeholders for feedback in May 2022.

On 30 June 2022 EMCCSC endorsed proposed changes to the in-scope core capability descriptions and critical tasks, and on 28 July 2022 EMCCSC endorsed the updated VPF.

On 11 August 2022 SCRC approved the updated VPF to replace the current published version.

The updated VPF includes five amendments to core capability descriptors and 16 amendments to critical tasks, helping to ensure that core capability descriptors and critical tasks continue to accurately represent contemporary arrangements. No new critical tasks were created as a result of the review.

Content in the updated VPF on shared responsibility and resilient communities was informed by the responses to a community survey that EMV conducted through the Engage Victoria platform from January to March 2022.

As part of the review the contents of the high-level Victorian Preparedness Goal were consolidated into the VPF and the language revised to be more inclusive and accessible.

Learnings from the public health response to the pandemic and recent bushfire seasons

EMV informed IGEM that the deliberately high-level nature of the core capabilities and critical tasks makes them transferable across many emergencies. Specific emergency events and their learnings are not expected to trigger changes to the VPF.

The review scope identified three core capabilities particularly aligned to these events. However, no need for review was identified by relevant departments and agencies in relation to one (Fire Management and Suppression) and no changes proposed for the other two (Health Protection and Health Emergency Response).

Measures to address capability gaps

The updated VPF provides an illustration of the sector's current service offering.

Potential measures to address sector capability gaps are being identified through an ongoing capability assessment process; the Emergency Management Capability and Capacity project led by EMV. Refer to FSIP1 Action 15.2 for more information.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.1.5 Recovery reform

IGEM found that recovery coordination was often reactive, siloed and disconnected across recovery organisations due to a lack of clarity in organisational roles and responsibilities, and insufficient resourcing for long-term recovery.

Evidence considered for IGEM's 10 Year Review indicated that many of the foundational recovery planning and coordination arrangements were not clear and did not define clear roles and responsibilities for the community and recovery organisations. This created delays and frustrations for the sector and community, duplicating work in some areas and leaving service delivery gaps in others.

To address these issues, IGEM recommended that EMV lead the development of comprehensive operational recovery guidelines.

10YOR Recommendation 5

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector – develop comprehensive operational recovery guidelines that include:

- coordination arrangements for recovery activities across all tiers of emergency management
- pre-emergency and post-emergency recovery roles and responsibilities of the sector at the state, regional and municipal levels
- community recovery roles and responsibilities
- methods to provide logistical and financial support to impacted communities
- consideration of how to support community-led initiatives
- tools and approaches to share knowledge across councils and community service organisations
- how to consider and plan for long-term recovery needs.

Table 6: Status of recovery reform actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
RECOVERY REFORM				
10YOR 5.1	BRV will continue to coordinate and report on the Victorian Government's implementation of the State-wide Bushfire Recovery Framework and Action Plan for communities impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires.	Ongoing	In progress	BRV
10YOR 5.3	EMV, working with BRV, will develop operational recovery guidelines to pilot with key partners and local government through the 2020–21 fire season. (Subject to IGEM Phase 2 outcomes)	May 2021 February 2022 (revised)	In progress	EMV
10YOR 5.4	EMV, working with BRV and key partners, will finalise and maintain operational recovery guidelines for all emergencies. (Subject to IGEM Phase 2 outcomes)	December 2021 February 2022 (revised)	In progress	EMV

10YOR 5.1. BRV will continue to coordinate and report on the Victorian Government’s implementation of the State-wide Bushfire Recovery Framework and Action Plan for communities impacted by the 2019–20 bushfires.

IGEM’s 2021 progress report noted the publication by BRV of:

- a Recovery Framework (June 2020) to provide for a consistent and community-led approach to the planning and delivery of recovery activities for the 2019–20 Eastern Victorian bushfires
- the Eastern Victorian Fires 2019–20 State Recovery Plan (August 2020) to support the recovery of communities impacted by the bushfires over the next 12 to 18 months.

Both documents are available at vic.gov.au/2019-20-eastern-victorian-bushfires. BRV is currently in the process of updating both documents.

BRV reports internally on implementation of the Statewide Bushfire Recovery Framework and State Recovery Plan through the State Recovery Working Groups, with a dedicated working group for all lines of recovery:

- business and economy
- buildings and infrastructure
- environment and biodiversity
- Aboriginal culture and healing
- people and wellbeing.

In August 2021, BRV published *Stories of Bushfire Recovery – Aboriginal Culture and Healing* on the Victorian Government website at vic.gov.au/node/18237

BRV planned to provide further information on recovery progress and the delivery of services to Victorians impacted by the 2019–20 bushfires on its website, but resourcing challenges prevented this.

IGEM notes that other government channels also provide information on recovery progress and the delivery of services, for example on 2 June 2022 the Minister for Emergency Services provided an update on home rebuilds in fire-affected parts of Victoria. More information can be found at premier.vic.gov.au/home-rebuilds-taking-shape-fire-affected-victoria

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

10YOR 5.3. EMV, working with BRV, will develop operational recovery guidelines to pilot with key partners and local government through the 2020–21 fire season.

10YOR 5.4 EMV, working with BRV and key partners, will finalise and maintain operational recovery guidelines for all emergencies.

Emergency Recovery Resource Portal

IGEM’s 2021 progress report provided an overview of EMV’s initial approach to this action as approved by the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) – the development of an online platform to provide recovery guidance for communities and the sector – and its work to develop the portal with community and sector partners.

IGEM noted the potential benefits of this approach, but also that it risked leaving some key issues identified in the Phase 1 report unaddressed in relation to the lack of clarity on recovery planning and coordination arrangements.

Emergency Recovery Resource Portal

A place for people engaged in recovery to access recovery related resources and guidance.

Key links

- [I need to act ->](#)
- [I work with long term recovery ->](#)
- [Lessons learned and wellbeing ->](#)
- [Community recovery stories ->](#)
- [Search for a resource ->](#)

About this portal

The Emergency Recovery Resource Portal provides a central point of access to key recovery resources and guidance for the disaster recovery workforce. It's purpose is to better enable community-led recovery and resilience practices.

[Learn more](#)

What do you want to do?

Explore the three sections below to learn more and access useful resources.

Act - Take action to support communities early in their recovery

Simple documents tailored to when you need to act to support your recovery work and guide you on how to do things with checklists.

[I need to act ->](#)

Long term recovery - Support long term recovery for people and communities

There is no timeframe for recovery. It cannot be measured by how long it takes and there is no simple definition of "done".

[I work with long term recovery ->](#)

Lessons learned and wellbeing - Understand the effects of disasters and learn about recovery

Every recovery is different, but recovery planning and approaches should be informed by evidence and lessons learned.

[Learn about lessons learned and wellbeing ->](#)

The Emergency Recovery Resource Portal provides a central point of access to key recovery resources (Source: EMV)

Operational Recovery Guidance

EMV advised that the establishment of ERV and its accountability for state and regional recovery coordination requires that new guidance be developed to outline operational recovery arrangements and how these integrate with response and relief coordination accountabilities.

EMV advised that a new Relief and Recovery Coordination Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be developed to provide guidance on the new operational coordination arrangements and support role clarity ahead of the 2022–23 summer season. Feedback on draft guidance will be sought from the sector and the SOP will complement the recovery guidance already available on the Emergency Recovery Resource Portal.

For more information on the establishment of ERV refer to section 2.4 of this report.

IGEM observations

IGEM observes that operational recovery guidelines were not developed in time to pilot with key partners and local government for the 2020–21 fire season. Given the renewed focus on developing the guidelines in line with the wording of 10YOR Actions 5.3 and 5.4, IGEM will provide a further update on these in its next progress report.

Although the due date for these two actions is February 2022, IGEM notes EMV's advice that the development and maintenance of the guidance will rest with ERV once established.

Finding

IGEM considers that these actions are progressing satisfactorily, noting revised due dates were approved by SCRC.

In October 2021 EMV updated SCRC that it had received \$500,000 of budget supplementation funding for development of the portal and received SCRC approval to revise the due date of these actions to February 2022.

In December 2021 the government launched the Emergency Recovery Resource Portal (vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-portal). The portal provides a central point of access to key recovery resources and guidance for the disaster recovery workforce, as well as resources for communities and agencies supporting recovery in Victoria.

Management of the portal transitioned to BRV in June 2022. A multi-agency management group provides ongoing oversight of the portal, including identifying new content for inclusion and potential enhancements.

4.2 Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season – Phase 1

The Implementation Plan sets out 113 actions that relate to the 17 recommendations that were made in IGEM's Phase 1 report.

For a full list of all recommendations and actions pertaining to the Phase 1 report, including actions reported as complete or closed in IGEM's 2021 progress report, refer to Appendix A.

4.2.1 Preparedness and training

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that while training conducted over 2018 and 2019 placed agencies in a strong position to respond to the 2019–20 fire season, there were common areas for improvement identified in evaluations and reports of training and exercises that had taken place.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV review preparedness arrangements and ensure that procedural documentation, recruitment, briefings and training are completed before seasonal events are likely to occur.

FSIP1 Recommendation 1

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that responder agencies and Emergency Management Victoria review preparedness arrangements to ensure procedural documentation (including plans), recruitment, briefings and training are completed before significant seasonal events are likely to occur.

Seasonal preparedness should culminate in attestations of assurance to confirm that:

- a) documentation reflects relevant risks and potential impacts
- b) briefings and training schedules have been tailored and delivered according to seasonal influences
- c) recruitment strategies enable the engagement of adequate numbers of appropriately skilled personnel for the entire season.

Table 7: Status of preparedness and training action reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
PREPAREDNESS AND TRAINING				
FSIP1 1.8	The attestation process will be broadened to address a wider range of emergency risks, including non-seasonal risks. This will reinforce the requirements for the sector to be prepared to respond to any emergency event on any day of the year.	November 2021	Complete	EMV

FSIP1 1.8. The attestation process will be broadened to address a wider range of emergency risks, including non-seasonal risks. This will reinforce the requirements for the sector to be prepared to respond to any emergency event on any day of the year.

EMV has introduced a new attestation process that was trialled for the 2021–22 summer season. The expanded approach requires agencies to report on their preparedness across a range of hazards for which they are control agencies as outlined in the SEMP, including agencies with relief and early recovery responsibilities. This approach addresses a wider range of emergency risks including non-seasonal risks such as cyber, biosecurity and pandemics.

Using this approach, the sector provided a full Annual Preparedness Report to the EMC in November 2021. EMV advised that a summary was provided to the minister and the Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet.

The Annual Preparedness Report provides assurance that a range of key preparedness activities have been or will be completed. The report provides information on the preparedness activities of each agency aligned to their critical tasks under the Victorian Preparedness Framework (and as articulated in the Roles and Responsibilities section of the SEMP).

EMV advised that this approach will form the basis for future seasonal assurance reporting across the sector, with discussions underway on the timing and frequency for future reporting.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.2.2 Victorian arrangements for fuel management

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that the level of fuel management conducted by private land managers and fire agencies is inhibited due to structural and policy issues within these organisations and conflicts between various, complex legislative requirements.

IGEM's report also found that the current legislation enabling fuel management is complex and does not support a true cross-tenure approach, despite willingness from land and fire agencies to work together. The report recommended that the state review and – where necessary – amend fuel management legislation to address these issues.

FSIP1 Recommendation 2

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the State review (and where necessary amend) legislation including but not limited to the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*, *Forest Act 1958* and *Local Government Act 2020* to:

- a) clarify accountability for fuel management across land and fire agencies, public authorities, councils, private organisations and individuals
- b) define shared responsibility for fuel management across land and fire agencies, stakeholders and community
- c) enable organisations with a legislated responsibility for fuel management to conduct fuel management on behalf of other organisations on land outside of their legislated land tenure, where invited to do so
- d) provide consistent protections to all personnel, including volunteers, when carrying out fuel management functions on behalf of their legislated organisation.

Table 8: Status of Victorian arrangements for fuel management actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
VICTORIAN ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUEL MANAGEMENT				
FSIP1 2.1	DELWP will continue to work with Traditional Owners to implement the Cultural Fire Strategy.	Timelines to be developed in consultation with Traditional Owner Corporations	In progress	DELWP
FSIP1 2.2	<p>DELWP and DJCS will lead a review of the legislative framework and consider legislative change to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable more effective planning and delivery of bushfire management across different land tenures and responsible agencies • support greater interoperability • ensure all firefighters (including volunteers) have sufficient legal protections when carrying out fuel management, and • consider any relevant legislative recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. <p>Legislative changes will be introduced in 2022.</p> <p>The review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure accountabilities for fuel management are clear, and consistent with the principle of shared responsibility, • maintain individual rights and responsibilities while also enabling land and fire agencies, public authorities, councils, private organisations and individuals to work together to manage fuel on public and private land • enable land and fire management departments and agencies, including DELWP, the CFA, local government, DoT and other land managers, to conduct fuel management on any land where mutual agreement exists • identify any measures required to better enable Traditional Owners to carry out cultural fire • ensure consistent protections and immunities for all personnel, including volunteers, when carrying out fuel management activities on behalf of their legislated organisations • consider the role of an expanded Code of Practice for Bushfire Management • examine the need for change to regulatory tools such as fire permits, and • enable to end-to-end bushfire risk management framework for all public and private land in Victoria, such as powers to create plans or standards for how land and fire agencies manage bushfire risk. 	December 2022 July 2023 (revised)	In progress	DELWP & DJCS

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FSIP1 2.3	DELWP will work with road and rail managers, local government and other stakeholders to ensure clarity on regulatory controls and deliver efficient approvals processes relevant to activities to reduce bushfire risk, such as permitted native vegetation removal and permits to burn off while ensuring environmental protections are maintained.	December 2021	In progress (overdue)	DELWP

FSIP1 2.1. DELWP will continue to work with Traditional Owners to implement the Cultural Fire Strategy.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that across 2020–21 DELWP supported participating Traditional Owner Corporations to articulate their individual pathway to implement the Cultural Fire Strategy¹¹.

The report also noted that the 2021–22 Victorian State Budget provided dedicated funding of \$22.6m over four years, with \$6.3m ongoing to support Traditional Owners. In 2021–22 DELWP finalised agreements with ten of Victoria's legally-recognised Traditional Owner Groups for core cultural fire funding that spans a four-year period. DELWP advised that it is continuing to work with an additional legally-recognised group to provide funding for their cultural fire pathway.

In April 2022 the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change announced applications for the Cultural Fire Grants program. The program supports Victorian Traditional Owners to lead the practice of cultural burning and support their unique pathway for managing Country under the strategy. The program was open to all Victorian Traditional Owners including those who do not have legal recognition. Grants are expected to be announced in the second half of 2022¹².

Since 2019 DELWP has enabled a total of 42 cultural burns, including 13 for the 2021–22 financial year. The government plans to enable 169 cultural burns across public land over the next three years.

Under the Cultural Fire Strategy an Aboriginal-led Cultural Fire Leadership Group has been established. The group brings together Traditional Owners and land managers to deliver local cultural fire plans. DELWP advised that the group last met in October 2021 where it requested the department procure the services of an Aboriginal-led Secretariat. The group is expected to next meet in August 2022, as this is a priority for Traditional Owners.

IGEM notes that there is no due date for this action and that timelines are to be developed in consultation with Traditional Owner Corporations. IGEM will revisit this action in the next progress report.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

¹¹ The Cultural Fire Strategy is available at ffm.vic.gov.au/fuel-management-report-2018-19/statewide-achievements/cultural-fire-strategy

¹² Cultural Fire Grants (environment.vic.gov.au)

FSIP1 2.2. DELWP and DJCS will lead a review of the legislative framework and consider legislative change to:

- **enable more effective planning and delivery of bushfire management across different land tenures and responsible agencies**
- **support greater interoperability**
- **ensure all firefighters (including volunteers) have sufficient legal protections when carrying out fuel management, and**
- **consider any relevant legislative recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.**

Legislative changes will be introduced in 2022. The review will:

- **ensure accountabilities for fuel management are clear, and consistent with the principle of shared responsibility,**
- **maintain individual rights and responsibilities while also enabling land and fire agencies, public authorities, councils, private organisations and individuals to work together to manage fuel on public and private land**
- **enable land and fire management departments and agencies, including DELWP, the CFA, local government, DoT and other land managers, to conduct fuel management on any land where mutual agreement exists**
- **identify any measures required to better enable Traditional Owners to carry out cultural fire**
- **ensure consistent protections and immunities for all personnel, including volunteers, when carrying out fuel management activities on behalf of their legislated organisations**
- **consider the role of an expanded Code of Practice for Bushfire Management**
- **examine the need for change to regulatory tools such as fire permits, and**
- **enable to end-to-end bushfire risk management framework for all public and private land in Victoria, such as powers to create plans or standards for how land and fire agencies manage bushfire risk.**

DELWP and DJCS (EMV) are leading the legislative framework review which will deliver a recommended package of legislative amendments to government and the ministers responsible for bushfire risk management legislation, including alternative options where relevant.

In October 2021 SCRC approved a request to extend the due date for the delivery of this action to July 2023 to allow sufficient time to engage with stakeholders.

The Fuel Management Legislative Review IDC has been established, comprising executives from DELWP and DJCS (EMV) which meets regularly to provide oversight. This IDC is supported by the Fuel Management Legislative Review Working Group. The working group consists of government departments, fire services agencies, land managers, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM), and provides advice to the IDC on the review.

In July 2022 DELWP developed a discussion paper describing key issues with the current legislative framework, opportunities for improvement and the key outcomes to be achieved by the review. The discussion paper will inform a series of workshops to be held with the working group from July to September 2022. The workshops will explore identified issues and provide members with the opportunity to suggest improvements to fuel and broader bushfire management across public and private land. The workshop outcomes will inform the development of policy options for public consultation and government consideration in 2023.

IGEM notes that the scope of the legislative review does not include identifying measures required to better enable Traditional Owners to carry out cultural fire. DELWP instead intends to work with Traditional Owners to progress their aspirations for cultural fire and broader bushfire management through its review of the Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land (2012) and a separate legislative review project that focuses on removing barriers to cultural fire practices.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by SCRC.

FSIP1 2.3. DELWP will work with road and rail managers, local government and other stakeholders to ensure clarity on regulatory controls and deliver efficient approvals processes relevant to activities to reduce bushfire risk, such as permitted native vegetation removal and permits to burn off while ensuring environmental protections are maintained.

Victoria's native vegetation clearing regulations determine that a permit is usually required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, however exemptions are available to road and rail organisations to manage vegetation to mitigate bushfire risks.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that DELWP had developed surveys for road and rail managers to confirm:

- if they are aware of the current exemptions, and if so utilise them
- what hurdles prevent the use of these exemptions
- what improvements could be made.

Following the circulation of the surveys in July 2021, DELWP compiled the results to identify improvements to native vegetation regulation processes, and in September 2021 developed an implementation plan.

Regulatory controls

DELWP has updated guidance material for road and rail managers to strengthen their understanding of existing Clause 52.17 exemptions enabling bushfire risk mitigation activities to proceed without a permit.

Relevant bushfire mitigation activities include:

- firefighting
- planned burning, including any requirements to obtain a permit to burn
- making or maintenance of a fuel break or firefighting access track (or a combination thereof) that does not exceed a combined width of 6 metres
- compliance with section 65 of the *Forests Act 1958* or section 41 of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*
- minimising the risk to life and property from bushfire on a roadside of public land managed by the relevant responsible road authority in accordance with the written agreement by the Secretary DELWP.

The guidance also informs rail and road managers of their obligations under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. DELWP advised that this guidance will be available shortly on its website.

Approval process

All rail managers engaged through the project indicated that they were able to deliver bushfire risk mitigation activities under an exemption in an efficient manner. Approximately half of road managers surveyed considered the exemption process inefficient, while the other consider it efficient.

To enable quicker approval times, DELWP is amending the process for road managers to rely on the fire protection (roadside fuel reduction) exemption in Clause 52.17 by clarifying and streamlining what is required to obtain permission to rely on the exemption. DELWP expects these changes to be completed by December 2022.

IGEM notes that DELWP will consider opportunities to remove legal and regulatory barriers for landholders to undertake fuel management (including the fire permit system) as part of the review of fuel management legislative frameworks (refer to FSIP1 Action 2.2).

Finding

IGEM notes progress on this action and that it is overdue.

4.2.3 Effectiveness of Safer Together

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that, while the Safer Together program was intended to be a multi-agency initiative, uptake and acceptance had varied both within and between agencies, affecting delivery.

IGEM noted that despite a concerted effort to engage with communities, community feedback suggested that there was poor visibility and a lack of understanding of the activities occurring as part of the Safer Together program. IGEM also reported differences in planning and reporting practices between the various land managers.

To address this, IGEM recommended that the Victorian Government support DELWP to expand the Safer Together program to increase its uptake.

FSIP1 Recommendation 3

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the State support the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) and its partners to expand the Safer Together program to:

- a) increase program uptake and adoption by legislated fuel management organisations including local government, the Department of Transport and VicTrack
- b) implement a consistent risk-based approach to fuel management program planning from strategic through to operational and tactical levels supported by appropriate risk assessment tools, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting mechanisms
- c) develop common spatial datasets for use by all road managers, standardising road and roadside fuel maintenance levels based on bushfire risk and sharing resources to maintain continuous roadsides managed by multiple parties.

Table 9: Status of effectiveness of Safer Together actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
EFFECTIVENESS OF SAFER TOGETHER				
FSIP1 3.3	DELWP, in collaboration with EMV and other land and fire managers, will lead the development of a whole of sector strategy to guide land and fire management in the context of a changing climate, growing population and changing demographics by November 2021. In addition to public land, the whole of sector strategy will consider how to effectively support road managers and local governments to mitigate bushfire risks on roadsides and in high bushfire risk local government areas.	November 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	DELWP
FSIP1 3.4	DELWP will review risk-based strategic and operational planning frameworks and processes to better incorporate roadsides and private land by December 2022.	December 2022	In progress	DELWP
FSIP1 3.6	DELWP, in partnership with DoT, local government and other road and rail managers, will review existing roadside spatial datasets to identify gaps and opportunities to improve the consistency and usability of these datasets to manage bushfire risk on roadsides and rail corridors.	December 2022	In progress	DELWP

FSIP1 3.3. DELWP, in collaboration with EMV and other land and fire managers, will lead the development of a whole of sector strategy to guide land and fire management in the context of a changing climate, growing population and changing demographics by November 2021. In addition to public land, the whole of sector strategy will consider how to effectively support road managers and local governments to mitigate bushfire risks on roadsides and in high bushfire risk local government areas.

DELWP is leading the development of a whole-of-sector bushfire strategy in partnership with CFA, FRV, BRV, EMV, Parks Victoria, DJPR (Local Government Victoria), DoT, MAV and key interested local councils. The strategy aims to set the 10-year vision and outcomes for bushfire management in Victoria in the context of a changing climate, growing population and changing demographics. The Bushfire Risk Mitigation Committee provides governance and oversight of the strategy's development, supported by a cross-sector joint-project team that meets fortnightly to inform project decisions on the strategy.

In June 2022 SCRC approved DELWP's request to extend the due date for the delivery of this action to June 2023, to allow a more integrated approach to public consultation and stakeholder engagement, including with Traditional Owners.

Development of a draft strategy for public consultation is well progressed. In early 2022, DELWP shared the draft strategy chapter focused on 'Aboriginal self-determination in cultural fire and bushfire management' with Victoria's 11 legally-recognised Traditional Owner groups. DELWP advised that feedback has largely been incorporated however further consultation with Traditional Owners is required to address some outstanding issues.

DELWP is also in the process of developing a strategy for working with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and Traditional Owner groups that are not yet formally recognised to determine who best to engage with to address feedback received to date, and seek feedback on remaining chapters of the strategy.

The draft strategy utilises knowledge developed through the Safer Together program by including a narrative on community behaviour and behaviour change (refer to FSIP1 Action 5.5).

DELWP is also progressing the development of an implementation plan and a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework to accompany the strategy.

Fuel management performance targets

Along with the strategy, DELWP is concurrently progressing work on reviewing fuel management performance targets (refer to FSIP1 Action 9.5) and developing a communications and engagement plan to engage with key stakeholders and the community on these critical projects in early 2023.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by SCRC.

FSIP1 3.4. DELWP will review risk-based strategic and operational planning frameworks and processes to better incorporate roadsides and private land by December 2022.

To address this action DELWP plans to work with relevant partners to update its Strategic Planning SOP – last updated in 2015 – to include better reference to private land fuel management and roadsides as well as other risk management approaches such as suppression and prevention.

The updated SOP will better reflect Safer Together policy intent and seek to better align with fuel management approaches of other agencies. DELWP intends for the updated SOP to be easier for other agencies to incorporate into their procedures and to better articulate fuel management accountabilities for different land and fire management agencies.

DELWP advised that this work is dependent on outcomes of the legislative review it is undertaking under FSIP1 Action 2.2 and consideration of fuel management expectations to be developed by OBRM in partnership with other agencies.

IGEM notes that a timeframe extension for this action will be required, as the legislative review is due to be delivered in July 2023.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is in the early stages of development.

FSIP1 3.6. DELWP, in partnership with DoT, local government and other road and rail managers, will review existing roadside spatial datasets to identify gaps and opportunities to improve the consistency and usability of these datasets to manage bushfire risk on roadsides and rail corridors.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted preliminary work DELWP had conducted with road and rail managers to identify the most appropriate data sets to use for bushfire risk modelling activities.

Across 2021–22 DELWP progressed work with DoT regarding the supply of road datasets.

DELWP has included several datasets from DoT / VicRoads for proof-of-concept modelling as part of its Land Use Victoria¹³ routable VicMap transport project. These include:

- mass restricted bridges and bridge structures
- road status and road seal
- speed zones
- heavy vehicle access
- barriers and gates
- turning points and turn detail
- school zones and traffic lights.

DELWP intends this data to help facilitate access to firegrounds by heavy vehicles, including tankers. As well as this data being used for strategic bushfire risk modelling, in the longer term it may also be used for modelling bushfire readiness and response.

DELWP advised it has also held discussions with DoT about the supply of geospatial shapefiles of road reserves (road casement data set) that can potentially be used for future bushfire modelling, as it can be used to show where predicted fires may be stopped. It can also be used to determine areas that have a higher risk and may need to be protected by DoT on high fire danger days. DELWP advised that this data is currently being sourced by DoT.

DELWP intends to work with representatives from its VicMap team, Forest Fire and Regions Group and DoT to identify requirements and key steps for improving the consistency and usability of road and rail data to manage bushfire risk. This will include liaising with the newly established Roadside Fuel Management Working Group (refer to FSIP1 Action 6.9 for more information).

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

¹³ DELWP's Land Use Victoria is the state's key agency for land registration, property information, spatial data services and maps, surveying, land valuation, geographic names, government land policy and advice and government land transaction oversight

4.2.4 Barriers to cross-tenure fuel management

In its Phase 1 report, IGEM noted that despite the strong foundations of the Safer Together program, there were significant legislative and organisational barriers that inhibited its success.

IGEM found that cross-tenure fuel management was limited due to a lack of common arrangements or a single authorising body requiring land managers and fire agencies to plan, conduct, monitor, report and evaluate their fuel management programs in a coordinated manner.

To address this, IGEM recommended that the Victorian Government establish or assign responsibility to a single entity to lead the implementation of evidence-based fuel management policy.

FSIP1 Recommendation 4

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that in conjunction with Inquiry Recommendation 2, the State establish or assign responsibility to a single body or entity to lead and coordinate the implementation of evidence-based fuel management policy, practice and assurance and reporting on activities on both public and private land in Victoria.

Table 10: Status of barriers to cross-tenure fuel management actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
BARRIERS TO CROSS-TENURE FUEL MANAGEMENT				
FSIP1 4.1	DELWP will establish an Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) to lead and coordinate the implementation of evidence-based fuel management policy, practice and assurance and reporting on activities on both public and private land in Victoria.	June 2021	Complete	DELWP
FSIP1 4.2	<p>DELWP will establish an Advisory Panel to advise the Secretary to DELWP on agreed priority focus areas that assist the OBRM to effectively acquit its accountability to lead and coordinate the implementation of bushfire risk management (including advice on target setting), planning, delivery, assurance mechanisms and frameworks, and reporting across all public and private land in Victoria.</p> <p>The panel will comprise an independent chair, senior executives representing key land and fire management agencies (FFMVic, CFA, FRV, DoT and DJPR) and members with technical expertise in bushfire risk modelling and management, fire ecology, community behaviour change, land use planning and other specialist capabilities required to ensure the panel is equipped to provide high-quality, evidence-based advice.</p> <p>The Emergency Management Commissioner will be a standing member of the advisory panel, representing Emergency Management Victoria and ensuring linkages to Victoria's integrated emergency management arrangements and associated preparedness and assurance activities.</p> <p>The independent chair and skills based members will be appointed by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.</p>	June 2021 September 2021 (revised)	Complete	DELWP

FSIP1 4.1. DELWP will establish an Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) to lead and coordinate the implementation of evidence-based fuel management policy, practice and assurance and reporting on activities on both public and private land in Victoria.

In response to Recommendation 4 of IGEM's Phase 1 report, the Victorian Government committed more than \$21m towards establishing the OBRM.

IGEM notes that OBRM has now been established and has begun to acquit the activity required by this action.

DELWP has recruited ten OBRM staff including three managers and a director, and continues to recruit for seven further positions.

DELWP provided IGEM with a confidential OBRM Strategic Roadmap 2021–24 which outlines the first three years of activity to implement a consistent whole-of-sector approach to fuel management. OBRM's other key activities undertaken since its establishment include:

- obtaining membership on the Bushfire Risk Mitigation Committee
- engaging with land and fire agencies on its role
- contributing to the legislative review being undertaken under FSIP1 Action 2.2
- supporting the functions of the independent Advisory Panel – refer to FSIP1 Action 4.2 for further detail on the Advisory Panel.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 4.2. DELWP will establish an Advisory Panel to advise the Secretary to DELWP on agreed priority focus areas that assist the OBRM to effectively acquit its accountability to lead and coordinate the implementation of bushfire risk management (including advice on target setting), planning, delivery, assurance mechanisms and frameworks, and reporting across all public and private land in Victoria.

The panel will comprise an independent chair, senior executives representing key land and fire management agencies (FFMVic, CFA, FRV, DoT and DJPR) and members with technical expertise in bushfire risk modelling and management, fire ecology, community behaviour change, land use planning and other specialist capabilities required to ensure the panel is equipped to provide high-quality, evidence-based advice.

The Emergency Management Commissioner will be a standing member of the advisory panel, representing Emergency Management Victoria and ensuring linkages to Victoria's integrated emergency management arrangements and associated preparedness and assurance activities.

The independent chair and skills based members will be appointed by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

In October 2021 the then Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change appointed 10 members to the Office of Bushfire Risk Management Advisory Panel – including the EMC as a standing member – as well as an independent chair. The panel members comprise senior executives representing key land and fire management agencies (FFMVic, CFA, FRV, DoT and DJPR) and members with technical expertise in bushfire risk modelling and management, fire ecology, community behaviour change, land use planning, and other specialist capabilities. OBRM has a role as a standing observer on the panel.

The Advisory Panel first met in October 2021 and at the time of reporting had met a further four times. This panel provides advice on a range of policy and planning items including OBRM's strategic plan, proposed performance targets for fuel management, and the expansion of targets to other agencies and land tenures.

DELWP advised that the Chair and the Secretary DELWP have met twice since the panel was established to discuss the progress of OBRM and its future priorities.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.2.5 Community perceptions of the fuel management program

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that a significant percentage of the community were not satisfied with current fuel management practices on public land. IGEM also noted that the rationale for this dissatisfaction and proposed alternative approaches were not easily reconciled due to fundamental differences in the values and experiences underpinning these beliefs.

To address this, IGEM recommended that DELWP lead a community engagement program to improve the Victorian community's understanding of fuel and land management, including the concept of residual risk – risk left over after fuel has been reduced.

FSIP1 Recommendation 5

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – with support from all legislated fuel management organisations for public and private land – lead a community engagement process to improve the Victorian community's understanding of:

- a) the purpose of Victoria's fuel management program and the concept of residual risk
- b) the conditions under which fuel management effectiveness is limited
- c) how fuel management is planned, conducted, evaluated and reported.

Table 11: Status of community perceptions of the fuel management program actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE FUEL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM				
FSIP1 5.2	By June 2021, DELWP will update and simplify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information provided about Victoria's fuel management program, • the concept of residual risk and how fuel management effectiveness is evaluated, and • what bushfire risk means at state, regional and community levels. 	June 2021	Complete	DELWP
FSIP1 5.3	As part of the review of the risk target committed at Recommendation 9, DELWP, in collaboration with EMV and land and fire agencies, will develop a community engagement process that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds understanding of the fuel management program and its limitations, • makes targets more meaningful and understandable to the community, and • supports transparency and shared responsibility. 	December 2021	Complete	DELWP

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FSIP1 5.4	By December 2021, DELWP will develop shared guidance and principles for engaging with communities and with other agencies involved in bushfire risk management. The shared guidance and principles will clarify accountabilities and ensure a community-centred and consistent approach.	December 2021	Complete	DELWP
FSIP1 5.5	The whole of sector strategy for bushfire management will draw on behavioural change work being carried out under Safer Together to support people to take action to address bushfire risk in their local area and on their own land.	November 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	DELWP

FSIP1 5.2. By June 2021, DELWP will update and simplify:

- **information provided about Victoria's fuel management program,**
- **the concept of residual risk and how fuel management effectiveness is evaluated, and**
- **what bushfire risk means at state, regional and community levels.**

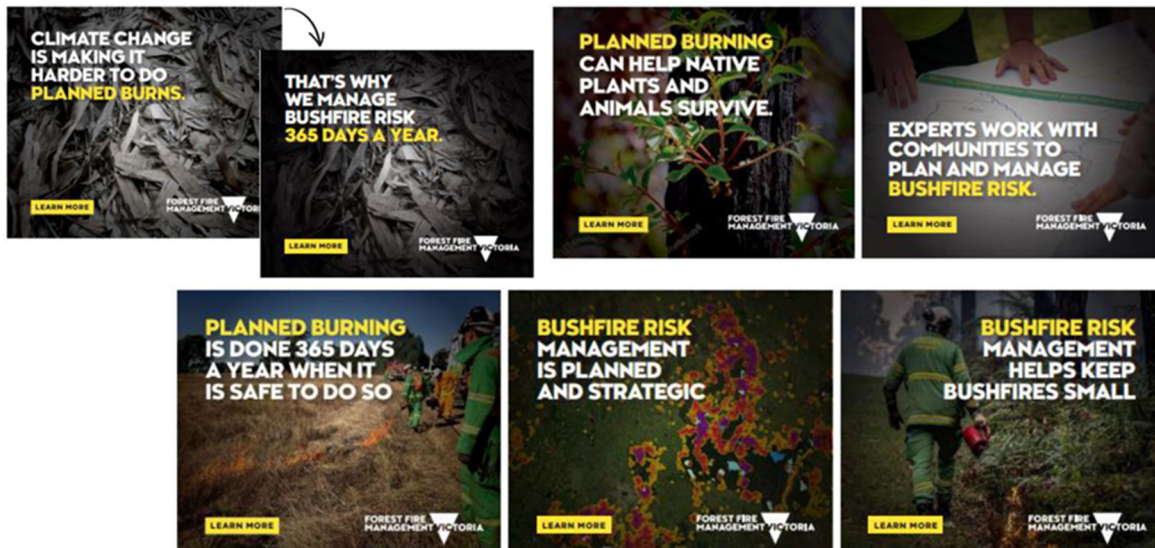
In 2021 DELWP commissioned a confidential report 'Building a better understanding of bushfire risk' to summarise the public consultation and market research it had undertaken in 2021.

The report considered community attitudes on topics including:

- perception of risk
- interest in bushfire risk information
- risk reduction activities
- risk reduction targets.

DELWP used the findings of the report to inform its 2021–22 bushfire season communication materials and to help guide the development of related FSIP1 Actions 5.3 and 5.4.

DELWP provided IGEM with a copy of the confidential report along with examples of communication materials that provide simplified information about Victoria's fuel management program, the concept of residual risk and how fuel management effectiveness is evaluated, and what bushfire risk means at a state, regional and community level.



Examples of DELWP communication messages (Source: DELWP)

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 5.3. As part of the review of the risk target committed at Recommendation 9, DELWP, in collaboration with EMV and land and fire agencies, will develop a community engagement process that:

- **builds understanding of the fuel management program and its limitations,**
- **makes targets more meaningful and understandable to the community, and**
- **supports transparency and shared responsibility.**

FSIP1 5.4. By December 2021, DELWP will develop shared guidance and principles for engaging with communities and with other agencies involved in bushfire risk management. The shared guidance and principles will clarify accountabilities and ensure a community-centred and consistent approach.

DELWP's approach to FSIP1 Actions 5.3 and 5.4 was guided by the findings from FSIP1 Action 5.2 which provided a baseline of the community's level of understanding and expectations around fuel management programs and attitudes and perceptions towards bushfire risk.

In the second half of 2021 DELWP engaged with agencies to seek their input and feedback on the development of a sector engagement process, and shared guidance and principles. Over the course of three workshops, approximately 40 sector participants considered their existing engagement guidance and frameworks to identify commonalities and leverage good practice towards development of a sector process.

The resultant draft sector engagement process and the shared guidance and principles were endorsed by the Bushfire Risk Mitigation Committee in November 2021.

In May 2022 DELWP held a further think tank session to help identify the opportunities and challenges to rolling out the sector engagement process with agency partners. DELWP plans to trial the products in the second half of 2022 and refine them using feedback from sector partners.

DELWP intends the community engagement process and shared guidance and principles to be flexible tools that can be applied to support engagement about bushfire risk understanding. This includes information about the fuel management program and its limitations, and to make targets more meaningful and understandable to the community (refer to FSIP1 Action 5.2).

Finding

IGEM considers that these actions have been implemented.

FSIP1 5.5. The whole of sector strategy for bushfire management will draw on behavioural change work being carried out under Safer Together to support people to take action to address bushfire risk in their local area and on their own land.

DELWP's Secretary has approved a revised due date for this action of June 2023 to coincide with the timelines for completion of the whole-of-sector bushfire strategy (refer to FSIP1 Action 3.3).

The whole-of-sector strategy aims to set the 10-year vision and outcomes for bushfire management in Victoria in the context of a changing climate, growing population and changing demographics.

DELWP has included a narrative on behaviour change in the working draft of the strategy, using the knowledge gained through Safer Together. This includes research undertaken into key risk reduction behaviours involving a survey of over 3000 community members from across Victoria.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by the DELWP Secretary.

4.2.6 Mechanical treatments

In its Phase 1 report, IGEM noted that there was a level of support for the use of mechanical treatments across all land tenures, including public land, to assist in achieving the fuel management program objectives.

However, IGEM found that Victoria's use of mechanical treatments had not increased since DELWP committed to do so in 2015–16, indicating that it was not using mechanical means to compensate for lost opportunities due to the reduced planned burning weather windows.

To address this, IGEM recommended that DELWP increases the application of non-burning fuel management treatments.

FSIP1 Recommendation 6

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – supported by other organisations with a legislated responsibility for fuel management – plan for and increase the application of non-burning fuel management treatments including mechanical means.

The annual fuel management report should include the non-burn component of fuel management treatment, track annual change, and provide a comparison to the previous three years.

Table 12: Status of mechanical treatments actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
MECHANICAL TREATMENTS				
FSIP1 6.2	DELWP will include additional data regarding the non-burn component of fuel management treatment on public land, track annual change, and provide a comparison to the previous three years as detailed in DELWP's 2019-20 fuel management report.	December 2020	Complete	DELWP
FSIP1 6.5	DELWP will expand the permanent network of strategic fuel breaks across Victoria by December 2022.	December 2022	Complete	DELWP
FSIP1 6.6	DELWP will continue to deliver an expanded 365-day per year fuel management program to respond to earlier and longer bushfire seasons and enhance Victoria's first attack capacity including personnel, plant and equipment.	June 2025	In progress	DELWP
FSIP1 6.7	DELWP will develop a strategy for the transition and retention of forestry contractors by June 2021, to ensure ready availability of specialist skills and machinery for the creation of fuel breaks, removal of hazardous trees and reopening of roads remain available to support bushfire and emergency management operations.	June 2021 May 2022 (revised)	Complete	DELWP
FSIP1 6.8	The Victorian Government will increase its investment in the construction and maintenance of public land roads and bridges (for example, upgrading timber structures to fire-resistant materials), management of hazardous trees, vehicles and equipment to ensure that firefighters can safely access the forest for fire prevention, preparedness, fuel management (including planned burning and mechanical treatment), suppression and recovery operations, under conditions of increased fire frequency and intensity. These activities are targeted at improving access to public native forests.	June 2023	In progress	DELWP

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FSIP1 6.9	To complement new fuel breaks on public land, DELWP and DoT will work in partnership to identify, prioritise and conduct fuel management along major arterial roads where road positioning provides strategic advantage for bushfire suppression. ¹⁴	December 2022	In progress	DELWP & DoT
FSIP1 6.10	DoT will also investigate vegetation management measures for the benefit of both biodiversity conservation and fuel reduction, such as the removal of invasive shrubs and the restoration of low biomass native grasslands.	December 2021	Complete	DoT

FSIP1 6.2. DELWP will include additional data regarding the non-burn component of fuel management treatment on public land, track annual change, and provide a comparison to the previous three years as detailed in DELWP's 2019–20 fuel management report.

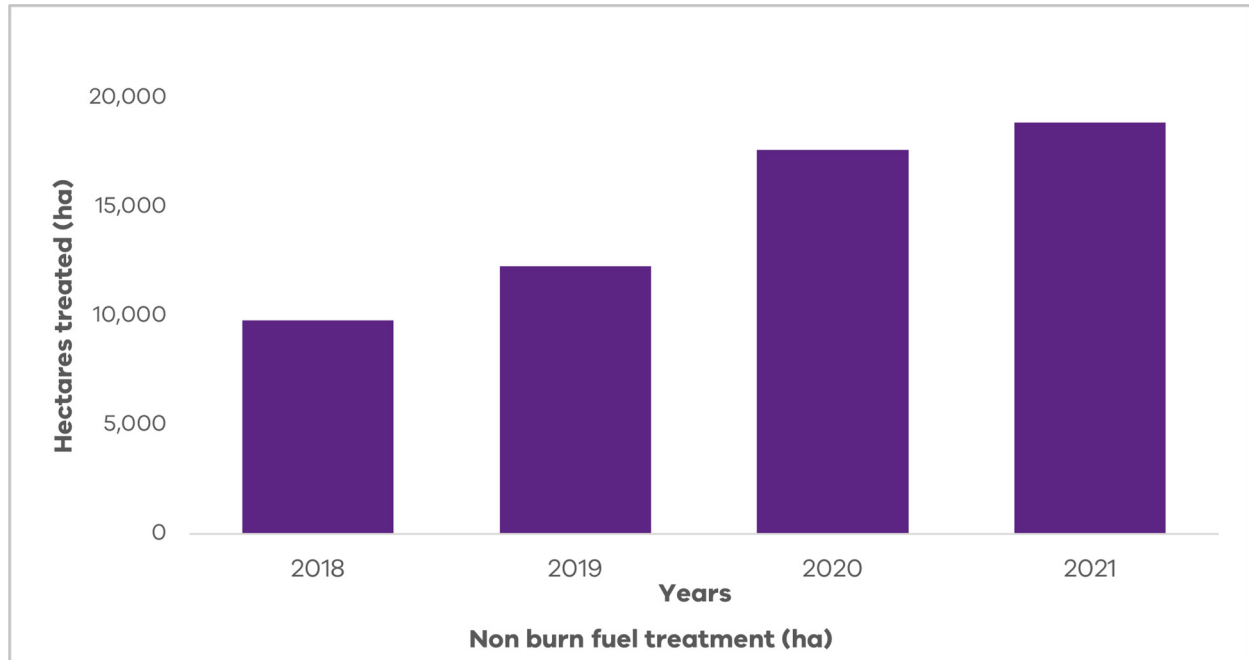
Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) comprises staff from DELWP, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and VicForests. FFMVic manages bushfires and bushfire risk in Victoria's parks, forests and other public land through:

- risk-based bushfire management and planning
- fire prevention and preparedness
- fuel management programs (including planned burning)
- emergency response and recovery.

The fuel management delivery section of FFMVic's *Managing Victoria's bushfire risk: Fuel management report 2020–21* includes comparative data on the non-burn fuel treatment component of fuel management on public land (refer to Figure 1, p 62). The report is available at ffm.vic.gov.au/fuel-management-report-2020-21

¹⁴ In October 2021 SCRC approved this revised action wording in place of the original action wording, which read: 'To complement new fuel breaks on public land, DELWP will work with DoT to identify and conduct fuel management along major arterial roads where road positioning provides strategic advantage for bushfire suppression and adds a valuable contribution to the strategic fuel break network'

Figure 1: Comparison of total area treated by non-burn fuel treatments 2017–18 to 2020–21 (Source: FFMVic)



Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 6.5. DELWP will expand the permanent network of strategic fuel breaks across Victoria by December 2022.

Strategic fuel breaks are strips of land where vegetation has been permanently modified to reduce the rate of fire spread and intensity. They are created for the direct protection of assets and to assist fire control.

The Victorian Government invested \$35m to deliver 1447 km of strategic fuel breaks across Victoria by July 2022. For more information refer to ffm.vic.gov.au/bushfire-fuel-and-risk-management/strategic-fuel-breaks-program

2020–21

During 2020–21 DELWP constructed and upgraded 545 km of strategic fuel breaks across the state. Details of fuel management activities for this year are available at ffm.vic.gov.au/fuel-management-report-2020-21

2021–22

During 2021–22 DELWP constructed a further 741 km of strategic fuel breaks. Another 164 km are in progress and once completed (when weather and site conditions are favourable) will deliver the cumulative target of 1447 km.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 6.6. DELWP will continue to deliver an expanded 365-day per year fuel management program to respond to earlier and longer bushfire seasons and enhance Victoria's first attack capacity including personnel, plant and equipment.

FFMVic's *Managing Victoria's bushfire risk: Fuel management report 2020–21* outlines the 365-day approach to fuel management in Victoria's forests and parks, which involves planned burning and mechanical fuel treatments such as mulching, mowing and slashing. The report is available at ffm.vic.gov.au/fuel-management-report-2020-21

In 2021–22 FFMVic delivered 277 planned burns covering more than 62,000 hectares.

DELWP provided IGEM with evidence that over 15,000 hectares was treated in 2021–22 using mechanical fuel treatment methods such as mulching, mowing, and slashing, including an estimated 1042 hectares in high risk reduction areas near communities.

FFMVic also constructs strategic fuel breaks between bushland and residential areas to reduce the likelihood that fires will endanger homes and other assets (refer to FSIP1 Action 6.5) and also upgrades and maintains the public land road network to support integrated land and bushfire management activities (refer to FSIP1 Action 6.8).

Personnel, plant and equipment

On 6 November 2021 the then Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change confirmed the appointment of an additional 154 Forest and Fire Operations Officers, creating a firefighting workforce of over 1000 ahead of the 2021–22 summer season.

Recent Victorian State Budgets provide investment in equipment and asset maintenance and replacement to support preventative bushfire services and the rapid response to emergency events.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.



Planned burn (Source: DELWP)

FSIP1 6.7. DELWP will develop a strategy for the transition and retention of forestry contractors by June 2021, to ensure ready availability of specialist skills and machinery for the creation of fuel breaks, removal of hazardous trees and reopening of roads remain available to support bushfire and emergency management operations.

DELWP has provided IGEM with a confidential pre-publication version of the completed forestry contractors strategy (Land and Fire Management: The Role of Forest Contractors) that sets out a range of activities it will undertake to secure these services.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 6.8. The Victorian Government will increase its investment in the construction and maintenance of public land roads and bridges (for example, upgrading timber structures to fire-resistant materials), management of hazardous trees, vehicles and equipment to ensure that firefighters can safely access the forest for fire prevention, preparedness, fuel management (including planned burning and mechanical treatment), suppression and recovery operations, under conditions of increased fire frequency and intensity. These activities are targeted at improving access to public native forests.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that four-year initiative and ongoing funding for key bushfire management programs (Reducing Bushfire Risk and Safer Together) through the 2021–22 Victorian State Budget would support continuing activity on the elements of this action.

Public land roads and bridges

Under the Reducing Bushfire Risk program, 10 crossing structures were replaced in 2021–22, with a focus on priority structures on strategic fire access roads.

A total of 2024 km of road upgrades and improvements were delivered across the strategic fire access road network, including 355 km of verge and roadside vegetation management to support safe access for firefighters and other road users.

Vehicles and equipment

As noted in the progress summary for FSIP1 Action 6.6, recent Victorian State Budgets provide investment in equipment and asset maintenance and replacement to support preventative bushfire services and the rapid response to emergency events.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 6.9. To complement new fuel breaks on public land, DELWP will work with DoT to identify and conduct fuel management along major arterial roads where road positioning provides strategic advantage for bushfire suppression and adds a valuable contribution to the strategic fuel break network.

On 7 October 2021 SCRC approved revised wording for this action to reflect the need to set priorities for fuel management along major arterial roads in a more coherent and consistent way.¹⁵

¹⁵ The original action wording for FSIP1 Action 6.9: 'To complement new fuel breaks on public land, DELWP will work with DoT to identify and conduct fuel management along major arterial roads where road positioning provides strategic advantage for bushfire suppression and adds a valuable contribution to the strategic fuel break network'

IGEM's Phase 1 report noted that roadside fuel management played a key role in the reduction of bushfire risk and in improving access and egress during bushfire response. However, it found that DoT did not consistently apply its own risk assessment and prioritisation guidelines¹⁶ to its roadside fuel management activities.

Proposed framework to identify and prioritise fuel management activities

DoT is responsible for managing Victoria's 24,000 km arterial road network and recently established a Roadside Fuel Management Working Group¹⁷ with CFA and DELWP to address this action. The working group held its inaugural meeting on 14 July 2022.

The working group aims to develop a framework to identify and prioritise fuel management activities along major arterial roads in order to:

- provide a strategic advantage for firefighting
- reduce bushfire risk
- enable safe access and egress routes before, during and after emergencies.

IGEM will provide an update on this initiative in its next progress report.

Bushfire Fuel Management Strategy

The DoT Bushfire Fuel Management Strategy 2021–24 was approved by its leadership team in October 2021 and supports the delivery of this action.

The strategy sets out priorities for reducing bushfire risk along transport corridors, including the streamlining of bushfire fuel management processes, and includes a three-year action plan to strengthen risk management, governance and interagency coordination processes.

Department of Transport fuel management activities during 2021–22

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that DoT delivered 18,973 kms of priority fuel treatment works along the arterial road network in 2020–21, funded by a dedicated Treasurer's Advance.

In 2021–22 DoT conducted business-as-usual grass slashing activities. These are undertaken for safety reasons, amenity, and line-of-sight clearance – and have the added benefit of fuel reduction. DoT advised that it works to undertake grass slashing at the most beneficial time of year ahead of each fire season.

IGEM's Phase 1 report noted that budget and resources were key barriers to DoT's fuel management program. IGEM notes that this remains an impediment and that dedicated funding may help DoT plan for and increase the application of mechanical treatments in line with Phase 1 report Recommendation 6.

The progress summary for FSIP1 Action 6.8 provides information on DELWP's roadside fuel management activities in 2021–22.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

¹⁶ The Road Bushfire Risk Assessment Guideline and Risk Mapping Methodology (2013)

¹⁷ As a time-limited sub-group of the Safer Together Fuel Management Partnership group

FSIP1 6.10. DoT will also investigate vegetation management measures for the benefit of both biodiversity conservation and fuel reduction, such as the removal of invasive shrubs and the restoration of low biomass native grasslands.

DoT investigated vegetation management measures for the benefit of both biodiversity conservation and fuel reduction through a pilot research project on grassland restoration, in conjunction with Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and La Trobe University.

The project found that native grasslands (ideally regularly burnt) are an effective roadside fuel break for fire management and for biodiversity conservation.

Following the pilot study, DoT has identified the location of a second grassland restoration corridor project (Woorndoo-Streatham Road Corridor), dependent upon funding.

DoT plans to incorporate these findings into business-as-usual roadside maintenance planning where funding allows and for future budget investment proposals. DoT advised that the findings will also be considered for inclusion in its next review of the VicRoads Standard Specification Landscape Works (Section 720)¹⁸, expected in late 2023.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.2.7 Fuel management tools

In its Phase 1 report, IGEM found that there were gaps in the current tools and models used in Victoria's fuel management program.

To address this, IGEM recommended that DELWP develops land and fuel management tools to allow for a more consistent approach to fuel management.

FSIP1 Recommendation 7

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) lead the development and distribution of evidence-based land and fuel management tools for use by all legislated fuel management organisations to ensure a common approach to fuel management.

Table 13: Status of fuel management tools action reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FUEL MANAGEMENT TOOLS				
FSIP1 7.6	The Victorian Government will provide additional funding to support Traditional Owners to lead implementation of the Cultural Fire Strategy.	June 2022	Complete	DELWP

¹⁸ VicRoads Section 720 – Landscape works – covers the requirements for works associated with the vegetation of a site. This includes, but is not limited to, material supply, site preparation, mulching, planting, grassing, irrigation and landscape maintenance.

FSIP1 7.6. The Victorian Government will provide additional funding to support Traditional Owners to lead implementation of the Cultural Fire Strategy.

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy (Cultural Fire Strategy) was officially launched by the then Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change on 10 May 2020. It articulates the aspirations of Traditional Owners to practice cultural burning and ensure knowledge about fire is sustained through generations (also refer to FSIP1 Action 2.1). The strategy is available at ffm.vic.gov.au/fuel-management-report-2018-19/statewide-achievements/cultural-fire-strategy

The 2021–22 Victorian State Budget provided dedicated funding of \$22.5m over four years, with \$6.3m ongoing to support Traditional Owners.

In 2021–22 DELWP finalised agreements for core cultural fire funding, spanning a four-year period, with ten of Victoria’s legally recognised Traditional Owner Groups. DELWP advised that it is continuing to work with an additional legally recognised group to provide funding for their cultural fire pathway.

DELWP advised that it will continue to seek ongoing funding for long-term implementation of the Cultural Fire Strategy.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.2.8 Fuel management reporting

IGEM's Phase 1 report noted that it was difficult to determine the effectiveness of Victoria's land and fire management organisations in reducing the harmful effects of the 2019–20 bushfires. This was due to a lack of measurable objectives, gaps in the current tools and models used, and inconsistencies in reporting processes.

To address this, IGEM recommended that DELWP develops a common set of objectives and reporting requirements for all organisations with a legislated role in fuel management.

FSIP1 Recommendation 8

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – in conjunction with legislated fuel management organisations – develop a common set of objectives, metrics and reporting requirements for fuel management that form part of a compulsory regime that enables the Victorian Government to report publicly on a holistic fuel management program.

The reporting requirements should:

- a) apply to all organisations with a legislated role in fuel management; across public and private land (all land tenures); and at all levels – state, regional and municipal
- b) include residual risk where appropriate - however, complementary metrics should be developed if residual risk cannot be determined.

Table 14: Status of fuel management reporting action reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FUEL MANAGEMENT REPORTING				
FSIP1 8.3	DELWP will expand the fuel management Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework and the annual Fuel Management Report, to incorporate private land, roadsides and public land managed by other agencies. This will commence with available activity data included in the 2021–22 report, building to a suite of relevant measures to provide transparency on activities and effectiveness in reducing bushfire risk.	October 2022	In progress	DELWP

FSIP1 8.3. DELWP will expand the fuel management Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework and the annual Fuel Management Report, to incorporate private land, roadsides and public land managed by other agencies. This will commence with available activity data included in the 2021–22 report, building to a suite of relevant measures to provide transparency on activities and effectiveness in reducing bushfire risk.

This action builds on work completed by DELWP in 2021 under FSIP1 Action 3.5 to identify the changes required to more fully incorporate private land and roadsides in the fuel management Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework and the annual Fuel Management Report.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework

DELWP provided IGEM with a confidential draft of an expanded Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework that includes fuel management activities on private land, roadsides and public land managed by other agencies within its scope.

The framework is being developed alongside the whole-of-sector bushfire management strategy currently being progressed under FSIP1 Action 3.3.

Fuel Management Report

DELWP plans to include all available activity data for private land, roadsides and public land managed by other agencies in the 2021–22 Fuel Management Report due for publication later in 2022, along with information on how these fuel management activities contribute to risk reduction.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

4.2.9 Appropriateness of the current residual risk target

The concept of residual risk refers to risk left over after fuel has been reduced.

IGEM's Phase 1 report noted that, despite the achievement of the residual risk target on public land for three years, there was a high level of dissatisfaction in some parts of the sector and the community in relation to fuel management.

IGEM also found that the residual risk target was a difficult concept for communities and individuals to understand.

IGEM recommended that DELWP, in collaboration with CFA, undertake a review of the residual risk target to support greater understanding of fuel management and to ensure its currency.

FSIP1 Recommendation 9

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – in collaboration with the Country Fire Authority and local government – undertake a review of the current residual risk target to ensure that it remains contemporary in terms of its designated percentage value. The review should:

- a) involve engagement with land and fire management agencies; public authorities; private organisations; individuals and any other stakeholders with a role in fuel management
- b) define a pathway to expanding the residual risk target to apply to all methods of fuel management, with the expansion of the target to apply across all organisations with a legislated responsibility for fuel management
- c) become part of a program of review of the State's land and fuel management policy occurring on a regular basis and not exceeding a five-year cycle.

Table 15: Status of appropriateness of the current residual risk target actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
APPROPRIATENESS OF THE CURRENT RESIDUAL RISK TARGET				
FSIP1 9.1	DELWP and CFA are undertaking work to improve bushfire risk data and modelling. This work will provide the basis of building the technical capability for agencies to work with stakeholders and the community to review the current residual risk target.	December 2021	Complete	DELWP & CFA
FSIP1 9.2	DELWP and CFA are currently updating approaches to modelling risk, centred on a metric of house loss. This work will broaden the range of values considered in bushfire risk modelling, to include water yield and quality, critical infrastructure, fire size and agricultural values.	December 2021	Complete	DELWP & CFA
FSIP1 9.5	DELWP will commission a comprehensive review of fuel management targets and provide advice to Victorian Government. New targets will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and the community and be communicated as part of the sector's new strategy for land and fire management, by December 2021. This will link to engagement on bushfire fuel management agreed in response to Recommendation 5.	December 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	DELWP

FSIP1 9.1. DELWP and CFA are undertaking work to improve bushfire risk data and modelling. This work will provide the basis of building the technical capability for agencies to work with stakeholders and the community to review the current residual risk target.

In November 2019 DELWP and CFA partnered to commence the Risk 2.0 Project to enhance the understanding of bushfire risk by improving data and models that underpin risk modelling and the residual risk metric.¹⁹

¹⁹ The residual risk metric is a tool to inform decision-making about the best strategies to reduce bushfire risk. It measures the risk to life and property that remain after planned burning and previous bushfires have been accounted for.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that DELWP had completed the technical updates and risk modelling that included:

- updating outdated and inaccurate data layers and models
- increasing spatial resolution
- extending the range of modelled weather scenarios
- introducing ignition and weather likelihood into risk assessments
- extending risk assessment to include additional values
- producing communication materials and undertaking engagement activities to ensure data and model enhancements are supported, understood and fit for purpose for agencies and communities
- providing the technological framework (including web-based data storage and processing) to support enhanced bushfire risk modelling.

Since then, a DELWP-commissioned review has been completed by an independent expert panel to assess the risk modelling improvements that will support new risk metrics implementation (refer to FSIP1 Action 9.5).

DELWP has also developed internal websites to communicate data and modelling improvements and the new and enhanced risk metrics.

DELWP intends to use the enhanced modelling to support the development of a new residual risk target, now expected to occur in 2023 in line with updated program timelines (refer to FSIP1 Action 9.5).

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 9.2. DELWP and CFA are currently updating approaches to modelling risk, centred on a metric of house loss. This work will broaden the range of values considered in bushfire risk modelling, to include water yield and quality, critical infrastructure, fire size and agricultural values.

DELWP in partnership with CFA developed the Risk 2.0 program to broaden the previous modelling metrics that focused on modelling risk based on potential house loss. Risk 2.0 enhanced the metrics that are used to estimate potential house and asset loss. It also introduced additional risk metrics to provide more realistic risk modelling, such as:

- **water supply** – assesses the risk of fires to water quality in Melbourne Water catchments
- **critical infrastructure values** – assesses the risk of fire to critical infrastructure assets in Victoria
- **fire size prioritisation** – enhances understanding of the risk of large landscape fires in Victoria's forests to support fuel management planning in Landscape Management Zones
- **primary production (agriculture)** – assesses the risk of fire to sheds, fences and plantations in Victoria.

DELWP has also developed internal websites to demonstrate and communicate these risk metrics.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 9.5. DELWP will commission a comprehensive review of fuel management targets and provide advice to Victorian Government. New targets will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and the community and be communicated as part of the sector's new strategy for land and fire management, by December 2021. This will link to engagement on bushfire fuel management agreed in response to Recommendation 5.

DELWP is leading the development of new fuel management performance targets using the suite of new performance metrics developed under FSIP1 Actions 9.1 and 9.2.

A DELWP-commissioned review has been completed by an independent expert panel on the progress made with Victoria's bushfire risk modelling system and risk-based decision-making framework (Risk 2.0) IGEM has sighted the confidential review which considers the validity of DELWP's risk modelling and provides recommendations for further enhancements to its risk-based approach.

DELWP has also recently completed work on a community engagement strategy which provides a foundation for communicating the new targets to the community (refer to FSIP1 Action 5.3).

In June 2022 SCRC approved a request to extend the due date for the delivery of this action to June 2023. DELWP intends to finalise the review of risk targets by the revised due date, including consultation with stakeholders and the community, to deliver this action in line with the timeline for the sector's new bushfire management strategy (refer to action FSIP1 Action 3.3).

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by SCRC.

4.2.10 Community understanding of roles and responsibilities

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that MEMPs and local emergency management plans were implemented inconsistently across response activities. IGEM noted that the access to and use of available resources, including equipment and assets, led to community frustration and confusion.

IGEM also found that the emergency management sector's approach to public communications did not result in a consistent, accurate and reasonable understanding across the community of the sector's responsibilities and roles before, during, and after emergencies.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV establishes guidance that clarifies roles and responsibilities and develops a communications strategy to ensure these roles and responsibilities are understood.

FSIP1 Recommendation 10

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in accepting that emergency management is a ‘shared responsibility’ – collaborate with the emergency management sector and community to:

- a) establish clear guidance that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of individuals, communities, the private sector, responder agencies and government before, during and after emergencies
- b) develop, implement and evaluate an ongoing communications strategy that ensures these roles and responsibilities are well-understood and reiterated throughout the year.

IGEM notes that the actions in response to Recommendation 10 do not specify the development and implementation of a new communications strategy. However, IGEM acknowledges that the Victorian Government continues to invest in a range of communication strategies to build understanding of what individuals, households and communities can do to mitigate emergency risk.

Table 16: Status of community understanding of roles and responsibilities actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES				
FSIP1 10.2	As part of the development of a state-wide community led preparedness strategy in response to the community preparedness recommendation of the 10-year Review report EMV will work with the sector to ensure that the shared responsibility model in the SEMP is further progressed through the regional and municipal emergency management planning processes.	SEMP Complete REMP December 2020 MEMPs December 2023	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 10.3	EMV and its sector partners will use the Victorian Preparedness Framework to plan and test different high-impact, plausible scenarios across the sector and with communities, to embed what shared responsibility means.	December 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 10.4	EMV and responder agencies will forge stronger partnerships with the private sector in emergency planning and response as part of the shared responsibility model, building on the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Plans and Sector Resilience Networks.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 10.5	The Victorian Government will continue to invest in different communication strategies to build a common understanding of risk and what individuals, households and communities can do to act and mitigate risk (for example, seasonal campaigns, engagement through the Safer Together Program and other year-round opportunities).	Ongoing	In progress	EMV

FSIP1 10.2. As part of the development of a state-wide community led preparedness strategy in response to the community preparedness recommendation of the 10-year Review report EMV will work with the sector to ensure that the shared responsibility model in the SEMP is further progressed through the regional and municipal emergency management planning processes.

The progress summary for 10YOR Action 3.3 outlines EMV-led work to review existing community resilience and preparedness strategies and initiatives, and to measure their effectiveness.

IGEM notes that this is important preparatory work towards the development of a statewide community-led preparedness strategy, however no action to deliver such a strategy is included in the government response to the community preparedness recommendation (refer to 10 Year Review Recommendation 3).

The shared responsibility model in the State Emergency Management Plan

The SEMP defines shared responsibility as ‘the collective obligations and accountabilities held by a range of actors.’

A commitment to shared responsibility recognises that no single actor can be responsible for emergency mitigation, preparedness, response or recovery. Individuals, communities, businesses, all levels of government and the not-for-profit sector all have a role to play.

State Emergency Management Plan, p 10.

According to the SEMP, ‘The governance arrangements set out in the EM planning framework supports the sharing of roles and responsibilities for EM with a wider range of actors, giving the community a voice and increased ownership over local arrangements.’

IGEM’s 2021 progress report noted that the SEMP clarified the roles and responsibilities of different actors with a shared responsibility for emergency management, including individuals and households, community groups and networks, and small, medium and large businesses.

Progressing shared responsibility through regional and municipal planning processes

Currently shared responsibility is provided for through the wide legislative membership on regional and municipal emergency management planning committees, which has representatives from across government and key emergency management agencies, as well as the opportunity for industry, community and not-for-profit representation.

Some REMP’s specify emergency management roles and responsibilities for a range of business, community and not-for profit organisations. There is potential for future REMP versions to expand on this.

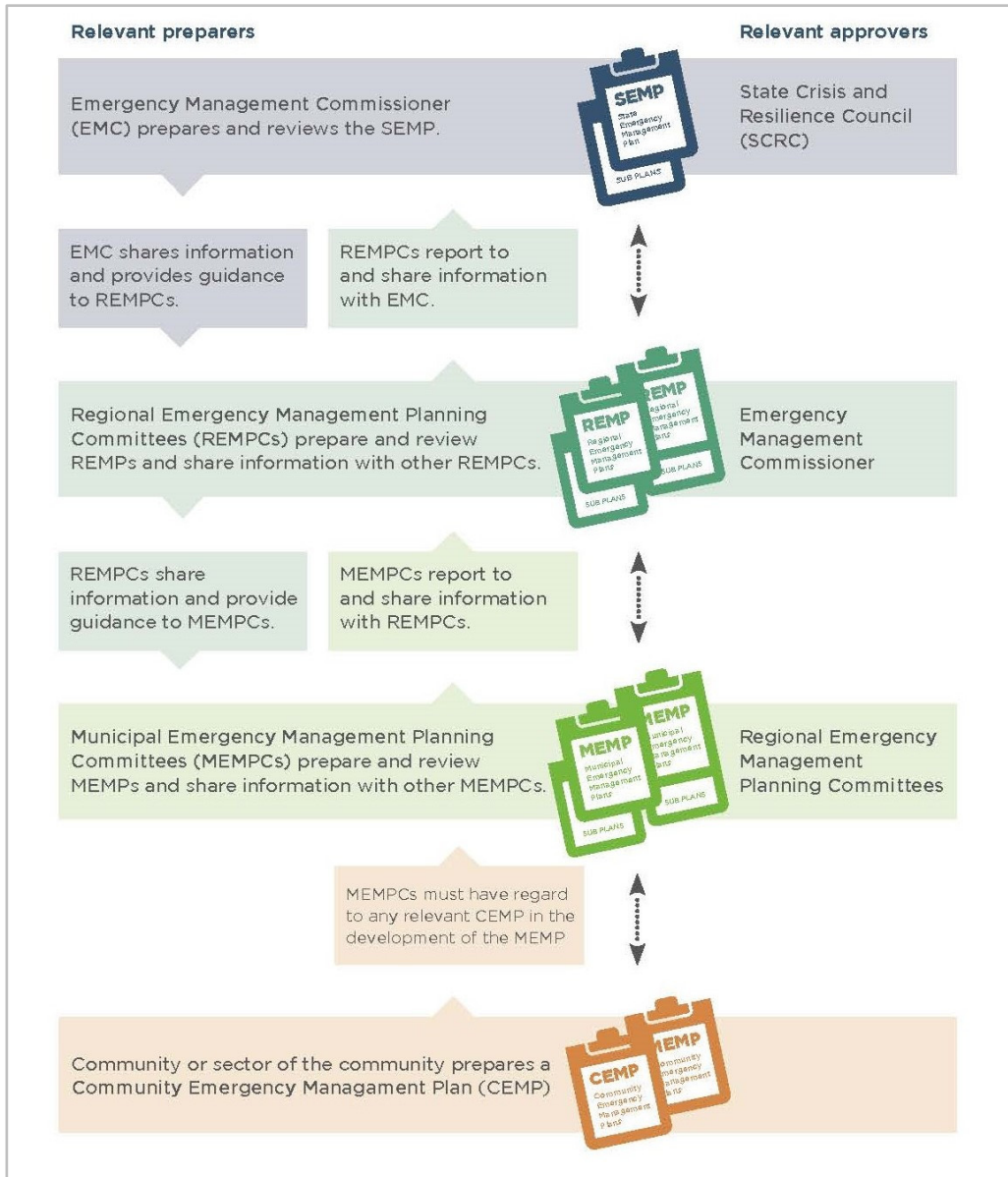
MEMPs also articulate the emergency management roles and responsibilities of municipal councils and other actors. MEMPs are currently being updated in line with their existing review cycles, including to ensure consistency with the SEMP and the relevant REMP. As with REMP’s, there is similar scope for the roles and responsibilities of business, community and not-for-profit organisations to find fuller expression in the updated MEMPs.

Refer to the progress summary for 10YOR Action 2.5 for more information on the MEMP review process.

Community emergency management planning

Under the emergency management planning framework (refer to Figure 2, p 74), communities can prepare Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs). While not the subject of this action, this is another way for shared responsibility to be progressed in emergency management. REMP’s currently record 10 CEMP’s in Victoria.

Figure 2: Framework for emergency management planning (Source: EMV)



Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 10.3. EMV and its sector partners will use the Victorian Preparedness Framework to plan and test different high-impact, plausible scenarios across the sector and with communities, to embed what shared responsibility means.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that EMV led three emergency scenario tests in June and July 2021 under the REMP and SEMP Scenario Testing Pilot Project. The tests used scenarios adapted from those set out in the VPF to increase planning committee familiarity with emergency management control arrangements. EMV prepared an evaluation report with feedback from participants to provide guidance for future emergency scenario testing.

Building on the pilot project, in early 2022 EMV commenced the Emergency Management Plan Exercising Project 2022–23 to deliver four community-centred scenario exercises with sector partners to explore catastrophic events, complex responses (such as evacuations), and operations under the shared responsibility model.

Victoria's shared responsibility approach, articulated in the SEMP, recognises that communities:

- are best-placed to understand and manage their own risks and drive preparedness, response and recovery
- should be empowered with the information, capabilities and opportunities to make decisions and work with agencies for better emergency management outcomes
- have networks and relationships that help agencies and communities identify the risks that a community faces, assess the vulnerability of the community to those risks and identify options to protect the values of most importance to them.

The Emergency Management Planning Reform IDC approved the project plan for this project on 2 February 2022.

Banyule Community Exercise

The Banyule Community Exercise is the first exercise of the Emergency Management Plan Exercising Project 2022–23. The concept plan for this exercise was approved by the Emergency Management Planning Reform IDC on 15 March 2022.

This exercise has a focus on seniors as the Banyule seniors community identified that they often face additional challenges to find, interpret and action public information and warnings. Four phases have been developed for this exercise, with each having a unique focus. IGEM observed Phases 1, 2 and 3 and also plans to observe Phase 4:

- **Phases 1 and 2** were held in August 2022 and focused on processes around development and dissemination of state and incident-level public information. These phases link with VPF Capability 2: Community Information and Warnings.
- **Phase 3** was held in September 2022 and focused on processes around development and dissemination of municipal-level public information. This phase links with VPF Capability 2: Community Information and Warnings.
- **Phase 4** is scheduled for November 2022 and will focus on message suitability and the Banyule University of the Third Age seniors community will be invited to participate. This phase links with VPF Capability 6: Building Community Resilience.

The VPF identifies and describes the 21 core capabilities and related critical tasks required to manage emergencies in Victoria. The VPF is available at emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/emergency-management-capability-in-victoria/victorian-preparedness-framework

Other community exercises

Engagement with the Kinglake community has begun for the second exercise, with a community meeting held on 26 May 2022 and the concept plan to be presented to SEMPC for endorsement.

The remaining two exercises are yet to be determined.

In June 2022 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action to June 2023.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by SCRC.

FSIP1 10.4. EMV and responder agencies will forge stronger partnerships with the private sector in emergency planning and response as part of the shared responsibility model, building on the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Plans and Sector Resilience Networks.

Victoria's SEMP states that the emergency management function of small, medium and large businesses under the shared responsibility model is to 'Mitigate emergency risk to employees and customers, support response activities by the EM sector and meet their own relief and recovery needs where possible.'

According to *Victoria's Critical Infrastructure All Sectors Resilience Report 2021* (January 2022), Victoria's critical infrastructure resilience arrangements are founded on strong partnerships between industry and government. Established connections are called upon in emergency events – for example, DELWP coordinated with AusNet Services and Energy Australia in responding to the June 2021 storm event and the subsequent closure of the Yallourn mine. This report and more information on Victoria's critical infrastructure resilience arrangements are available via emv.vic.gov.au/our-work/critical-infrastructure-resilience

Industry representation is provided for on REMPCs and MEMPCs.

In terms of activity to implement this ongoing action, stronger partnerships with the private sector are enhanced through the activities of existing Sector Resilience Networks, the annual development of Sector Resilience Plans, alongside cooperation on other preparedness activities.

Sector Resilience Networks

Sector Resilience Networks are an interface between industry and government for each of the eight critical infrastructure sectors.²⁰ Convened by government departments, the networks enable industry and government to discuss challenges, interdependencies, vulnerabilities, opportunities and better practices.

Recent emergencies have shown their benefit to industry-government collaboration, for example:

- Frequent meetings and reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed network members to share information and facilitate coordinated sector responses to limit disruption to the supply of essential services.
- Network members participated in debriefs and After Action Reviews to share observations following the 2019–20 Victorian bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- EMV facilitated an All Sectors Resilience Network forum in June 2022, at which DJPR and the Department of Health (DH) co-facilitated a discussion to capture learnings and observations on industry and government information flow during a prolonged emergency utilising the COVID-19 pandemic as a case example. The forum also included industry presentations from Woolworths Supermarkets, Yarra Trams, AusNet Services and NBN and a discussion exercise involving a prolonged earthquake scenario impacting all critical infrastructure sectors.

²⁰ Banking and finance, communications, energy, food and grocery, government, health, transport, water.

Sector Resilience Plans

Portfolio departments lead industry in developing a Sector Resilience Plan for each of the eight Sector Resilience Networks. These plans provide the government with information on each sector's overall resilience, key emergency risks and focus areas for resilience improvement activities.

Other activity

Across 2021–22 EMV:

- hosted six online information sessions for critical infrastructure entities between June 2021 and June 2022 – on topics ranging from exercise management and cybersecurity to COVID-19 mitigation and preparedness.
- facilitated a multi-agency pre-season preparedness briefing in October 2021. Presentations included those from emergency management responder agencies providing insight into the upcoming summer season including weather, bushfire, flood, energy supply, COVID-19 and strategic outlooks.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 10.5. The Victorian Government will continue to invest in different communication strategies to build a common understanding of risk and what individuals, households and communities can do to act and mitigate risk (for example, seasonal campaigns, engagement through the Safer Together Program and other year-round opportunities).

As noted in IGEM's 2021 progress report, departments and agencies continue to deliver various seasonal and year-round risk-related engagement activities. These include:

- information on bushfire risk and mitigation through FFMVic and the Safer Together program (also refer to FSIP1 Action 5.2)
- CFA's Plan & Prepare webpage (cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare)
- preparedness information on the VicEmergency app and website (emergency.vic.gov.au)
- DH continues to provide information on the COVID-19 pandemic in over 50 languages²¹ – refer to coronavirus.vic.gov.au/translated-information-about-coronavirus-covid-19

The Victorian Government delivered the 2021–22 water safety communications campaign 'Play it Safe by the Water' with a focus on males aged between 25–64 and parents and carers of children aged 0–4 – refer to vic.gov.au/water-safety

The Victorian Government intends to launch the 2022 Victorian Fire Season Campaign in November 2022. The campaign's core messaging will be 'How well do you know fire?'. The campaign will utilise advertising means, including television, digital, social media, radio and print. Regional and metropolitan content has been developed to draw attention to the nuances of each of the regions.

The progress summary for FSIP1 Action 12.6 provides information on statewide communication strategies for the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) and Australian Warning System (AWS).

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

²¹ The 2022–23 State Budget allocated \$3.9m to the effective public sector management of COVID-19 communications to ensure Victorians get the health information they need.

4.2.11 Evacuation

In its Phase 1 report, IGEM found that although information in evacuation guidance documents was considered and comprehensive, there was still a degree of confusion around evacuation during bushfires.

IGEM also noted that community members received mixed messages around staying or leaving following the Code Red declaration on 21 November 2019. As a result, some community members were not clear on evacuation requirements.

To address this, IGEM recommended that Victoria Police (VicPol) reflects on events of the 2019–20 fire season to review and enhance evacuation plans and processes.

FSIP1 Recommendation 11

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Victoria Police – in collaboration with the community and the emergency management sector – reflect on events of the 2019–20 fire season to review and enhance evacuation plans and processes with consideration of:

- a) high risk areas (including remote locations)
- b) early evacuation triggers
- c) the potential for isolated communities
- d) the presence of tourists and non-residents
- e) individual decisions to not evacuate
- f) the inability to evacuate
- g) consequence management and compounding events such as the loss of essential services or health impacts.

Table 17: Status of evacuation actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
EVACUATION				
FSIP1 11.1	The Victorian Government is reviewing State of Disaster legislation to ensure that existing powers in relation to evacuation are adequate for different emergency scenarios.	December 2021 July 2023 (revised)	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 11.8	Victoria Police will work with regions, partner agencies and the community to review, enhance and further develop evacuation plans for high-risk communities including those in remote locations. A key focus will be visitors and tourists planning to travel within these locations.	March 2021	Complete	VicPol
FSIP1 11.9	To further strengthen evacuation plans and processes, Victoria Police commits to work with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), land managers, fire agencies and the community to better understand and identify risks on a year-to-year basis, taking into account factors such as climate change, seasonal conditions, and previous bushfire history.	September 2021	Complete	VicPol

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FSIP1 11.11	Victoria Police will look at creating a cadre of specially trained personnel equipped to undertake evacuation and traffic management roles required in an emergency, to ensure evacuation and early departure from at-risk areas occurs seamlessly.	September 2021 November 2022 (revised)	Complete	VicPol
FSIP1 11.12	The Victorian Government commits to improving evacuation decision-making processes– for example, through expanded use of more sophisticated tools such as spatially based evacuation planning currently being trialled along the Great Ocean Road.	November 2021	Complete	EMV

FSIP1 11.1. The Victorian Government is reviewing State of Disaster legislation to ensure that existing powers in relation to evacuation are adequate for different emergency scenarios.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that this action was in the early stages of development with EMV conducting preliminary work to develop the scope and timeframes of the legislative review.

EMV has since developed a draft State of Disaster Legislative Review issues paper. The paper identifies key issues with the current legislative framework – including specifically in relation to evacuation powers – and high level options to address them. EMV plans to engage with government stakeholders in early 2023, with the outcomes of this consultation and the discussion paper informing a report back to government.

EMV's Chief Executive has approved a revised due date for this action of July 2023, which will also allow consideration of the outcomes from the governance review (responding to Recommendations 74 and 77 of the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry) under the EMV-led Emergency Management Reform Program, including how they might inform future evacuation powers and governance arrangements.

Finding

IGEM notes progress on this action, noting a revised due date was approved by EMV's Chief Executive.

FSIP1 11.8. Victoria Police will work with regions, partner agencies and the community to review, enhance and further develop evacuation plans for high-risk communities including those in remote locations. A key focus will be visitors and tourists planning to travel within these locations.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that VicPol does not have standardised evacuation plans ahead of time as each incident requires a tailored approach that can be modified as an event evolves. IGEM notes that Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) 03.12 'Evacuation for Major Emergencies' provides standardised procedures for the decision, warning, withdrawal, shelter and eventual return of persons impacted by major emergencies. The JSOP applies to CFA, DELWP (FFMVic), FRV and VICSES personnel, with VicPol discharging their responsibilities for evacuation in accordance with their agency policies and procedures.

VicPol is implementing this action by conducting evacuation exercises in each of Victoria's eight government regions, involving sector partners and community members. This alternative approach recognises the value of ahead-of-time exercising in high-risk communities to enable VicPol to test, review, enhance and develop its policies and procedures.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that VicPol had conducted five of the eight exercises with three exercises (Eastern Metropolitan, Gippsland and North-West Metropolitan regions) postponed due to the June 2021 extreme weather event and COVID-19 pandemic impacts.

During 2022, VicPol completed the remaining three exercises:

- Exercise Motus (Eastern Metropolitan) – conducted in May 2022
- Exercise Venus (Gippsland) – agency exercise conducted in April 2022, with a related community exercise conducted in May 2022.
- Exercise Walkaway (North West Metropolitan) – conducted in August 2022.



Exercise Walkaway, Wyndham (Source: VICSES/Twitter)

VicPol provided IGEM with materials demonstrating that each of the three exercises tested agency preparations, planning and decision-making for managing local community evacuation and traffic management in an emerging incident at the regional and incident levels.

IGEM notes that across the three exercises there was a focus on visitors and tourists planning to travel to these locations where appropriate, including the development of insights as part of the post-exercise reports.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 11.9. To further strengthen evacuation plans and processes, Victoria Police commits to work with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), land managers, fire agencies and the community to better understand and identify risks on a year-to-year basis, taking into account factors such as climate change, seasonal conditions, and previous bushfire history.

In October 2021 VicPol's State Emergency Response Coordination Division (SERCD) held six pre-summer briefings across four Victorian Government regions. The briefings included presentations from BoM, CFA, EMV, FFMVic, FRV, and VICSES. The presentations provided attendees with an understanding of the upcoming summer season, identification of risks and awareness to engage with the community.

SERCD also delivered a pre-winter briefing in May 2022, aimed at Inspector level (and above) staff who have oversight or an interest in emergency management activities. The briefing included presentations from BoM and VICSES.

VicPol provided IGEM with briefing materials that included consideration of climate change, seasonal conditions and previous bushfire history. IGEM notes that VicPol's evacuation exercises conducted under FSIP1 Action 11.8 also involve working with the community to better understand and identify risks.

SERCD has a portfolio tasked with delivering the pre-season briefings as business-as-usual activity in future.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 11.11. Victoria Police will look at creating a cadre of specially trained personnel equipped to undertake evacuation and traffic management roles required in an emergency, to ensure evacuation and early departure from at-risk areas occurs seamlessly.

In October 2021 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of November 2022. It also noted a change of scope from creating a 'cadre' of specially trained personnel to training a larger group of specialists to cover the whole state.

VicPol continued to provide training for specialty roles related to evacuation and traffic management across 2021–22. This included:

- 242 officers completing Incident Police Operations Centre (IPOC) training (with a total of 286 officers now qualified across the state)
- 90 officers completing evacuation and traffic management manager training (with a total of 558 officers now qualified across the state).

VicPol advised that it continues to deliver IPOC, evacuation and traffic management training throughout the regions and that its response to training will evolve as its emergency management capability continues to mature.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 11.12. The Victorian Government commits to improving evacuation decision-making processes – for example, through expanded use of more sophisticated tools such as spatially based evacuation planning currently being trialled along the Great Ocean Road.

EMV and the Victorian Government are addressing this action through a collaboration to develop two evacuation decision-making support tools – Simulations of Emergency Evacuations for Knowledge, Education and Response (SEEKER)²² and State-Wide Analysis of Evacuation Risk (SAFER).

SEEKER

SEEKER was developed through a collaboration between EMV, DELWP, RMIT University, CSIRO, Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Victorian Public Sector Commission as an evacuation modelling, decision support system that can:

- design an evacuation scenario to be simulated
- run an evacuation simulation
- carry out an analysis of the potential impact of a predicted hazard on a road network
- visualise the outcome of the simulated evacuation and produce summary results.

SEEKER provides rapid integrated analysis of bushfire behaviour, human behaviour and traffic simulations. It supports timely decisions by providing information on:

- the extent and severity of fire impact to the community
- complications associated with large numbers of tourists, major events, and transient populations in the region
- expected responses of community members to the fire situation and official warnings
- impact of activating traffic management plans given available resources
- trigger points for decision-making
- road speed and capacity constraints with respect to evacuating and background traffic
- unplanned consequences of traffic accidents or blockages as a result of trees over roads
- evacuation outcomes against a base case of no evacuation.

CSIRO's *Climate and Disaster Resilience Technical Report* (July 2020) notes that SEEKER addresses a significant gap in evacuation planning and risk mitigation capabilities and delivers an evacuation modelling platform that can support emergency management organisations in undertaking evacuation planning.

In December 2021 EMV coordinated a training exercise, involving a scenario of bushfires threatening coastal townships and summer traffic on the Great Ocean Road. The scenario was set in real-time and tested the IMT's evacuation decision-making under pressure on a severe fire danger day.

The exercise outcomes have been documented in a conference paper presented at the 2022 the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) conference. The paper notes that the exercise 'opened the eyes' of response agencies to the complexity of evacuation in a congested environment, and to the fact that ordering an evacuation, under short timeframes, may worsen the outcome for some people due to traffic bottlenecks that can form.

SAFER

Under the evacuation modelling project CSIRO and RMIT are developing a statewide risk assessment tool, SAFER.

SAFER measures the combined risk imposed by multiple fires across the full geographic extent of an Australian state. The tool computes several evacuability risk metrics from datasets comprising a road network, a population dataset, and the geographical extents of bushfire scenarios.

SAFER and SEEKER have complementary purposes to support evacuation decision-making processes.

²² Previously known as the Decision Support System

SAFER allows the end user to compute the maximum theoretical flow supported by the road network at the state-level across a large set of simulated fires. This allows decision-makers to quickly identify which communities and roads have elevated risks with respect to those fires. Once these 'hotspots' have been identified, SEEKER allows detailed scenarios-based analysis of consequences for a single fire and different mitigation strategies and evacuation options can be investigated ahead of time.

EMV advised that the previous funding sources for these evacuation modelling projects ended on 30 June 2022, however National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRRA) funding has been sourced for further development of the tools with a more national focus.

IGEM notes that in 2022, NRRRA and Emergency Management Australia (EMA) merged to form a new organisation – the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

EMV advised that Victoria will continue to engage with NEMRRA as part of its ongoing commitment to improve evacuation decision-making processes. EMV will also monitor the further development of the tools to evaluate their applicability for operational use.

More information on SEEKER and SAFER can be found at research.csiro.au/evacuation/

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.2.12 Regional tier of control

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that there was a degree of confusion among stakeholders as to the roles and responsibilities of the regional tier of control, and a view that it replicated many of the oversight and coordination functions provided by the state tier of control.

IGEM also noted that the regional tier of control was underutilised during the 2019–20 Victorian fire season due to a lack of role clarity and breaks in the line of control.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV review, update and confirm arrangements for all tiers of control with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and ensure these arrangements were exercised.

FSIP1 Recommendation 12

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the emergency management sector and as part of the emergency management planning reforms:

- a) review, update and confirm arrangements for all tiers of control, including the flexible application of areas of operations, with a particular focus on the triggers for activation, integration with other tiers of control and clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- b) exercise these arrangements to ensure they are appropriate and familiar during emergencies.

Table 18: Status of regional tier of control actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
REGIONAL TIER OF CONTROL				
FSIP1 12.3	EMV and its partners will train personnel on any consequential changes to the tiers of control through the introduction of the SEMP and undertaking scenario exercises to test the respective state, regional and municipal emergency management plans.	June 2023 (revised) ²³	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 12.4	State, regional and incident tier arrangements will be reinforced through the delivery of the Regional and Municipal Emergency Management plans to better support emergency response activities.	REMP December 2020 MEMP December 2023	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 12.6	The Victorian Government commits to developing community-focused communication and engagement strategies to build greater understanding of operational structures and arrangements across all phases of emergencies.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 12.7	EMV will conduct a review of the introduction of the first SEMP following the 2020–21 fire season, to inform any necessary changes, prior to the 2021–22 fire season.	October 2021	Complete	EMV

FSIP1 12.3. EMV and its partners will train personnel on any consequential changes to the tiers of control through the introduction of the SEMP and undertaking scenario exercises to test the respective state, regional and municipal emergency management plans.

EMV's Chief Executive has approved a revised due date for this action of June 2023 to align with completion of the Emergency Management Plan Exercising Project 2022–23.

Training on changes to control arrangements

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that EMV delivered briefing webinars in advance of the SEMP's September 2020 release – these remain accessible on the sector's EM Learning platform.

In 2021 EMV led a sector review of the SEMP. On publication of the revised SEMP in October 2021, EMV provided sector organisations with a detailed schedule of changes and an education pack on the key changes, including to control arrangements. These resources remain available via the Emergency Management Planning Resource Library at emv.vic.gov.au/em-planning-resource-library

The progress summary for FSIP1 Action 12.7 provides more information on the SEMP review process and changes to the SEMP as a result of the review.

Testing emergency management plans

The Guidelines for preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans (November 2020) state that planning committees should test and review their plans with relevant partner organisations as part of the planning process.

²³ The due date for this action was originally listed as 'complete' in the government implementation plan

EMV contribute to this process by leading projects that exercise selected plans. This activity generates guidance and learnings that support the wider exercising of plans by REMPCs and MEMPCs across the state.

The progress summary for FSIP1 Action 10.3 provides an overview of two EMV-led initiatives that contribute to the delivery of this action:

- emergency scenario tests of the SEMP and two REMP in mid-2021
- the Emergency Management Plan Exercising Project 2022–23 to deliver four community-centred exercises with emergency management partners.

IGEM acknowledges that other exercises conducted by the sector also provide scope for the ongoing testing of control arrangements at all tiers.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by EMV's Chief Executive.

FSIP1 12.4. State, regional and incident tier arrangements will be reinforced through the delivery of the Regional and Municipal Emergency Management plans to better support emergency response activities.

Victoria's eight REMP and its MEMPs include localised response content that contextualises general arrangements in the SEMP to the specific regional or municipal environment.

Regional Emergency Management Plans

The EMC endorsed Victoria's inaugural REMP in November 2020:

- Barwon South West
- Eastern Metro
- Gippsland
- Grampians
- Hume
- Loddon Mallee
- North West Metro
- Southern Metro.

The REMP are available at emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/emergency-management-planning/remps.

Municipal Emergency Management Plans

Existing MEMPs are being progressively updated in accordance with their existing three-year review cycles to ensure consistency with the SEMP and the relevant REMP. This activity is scheduled to conclude in late 2023 – refer to the progress summary for 10YOR Action 2.5 for more information.

Current MEMPs, including their sub-plans, are required to be available via council and Alpine Resort Management Board websites. A centralised library of links is also maintained on EMV's website at emv.vic.gov.au/index.php/responsibilities/emergency-management-planning/memps

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 12.6. The Victorian Government commits to developing community-focused communication and engagement strategies to build greater understanding of operational structures and arrangements across all phases of emergencies.

The main activity EMV is leading to deliver this action is the development of a community communications and engagement strategy focused on operational structures and emergency management arrangements.

EMV also develops communication and engagement strategies for specific campaigns in coordination with sector partners. This progress summary notes two examples, for the new AFDRS and the new AWS.

Community communication and engagement strategy

EMV has provided IGEM with a draft strategy to build better community understanding of emergency management arrangements.

The strategy outlines methods to develop audio and video-enabled content designed to enhance public understanding of how Victoria manages emergencies and increase public understanding of the functions, roles, escalation measures and structures of the emergency management sector.

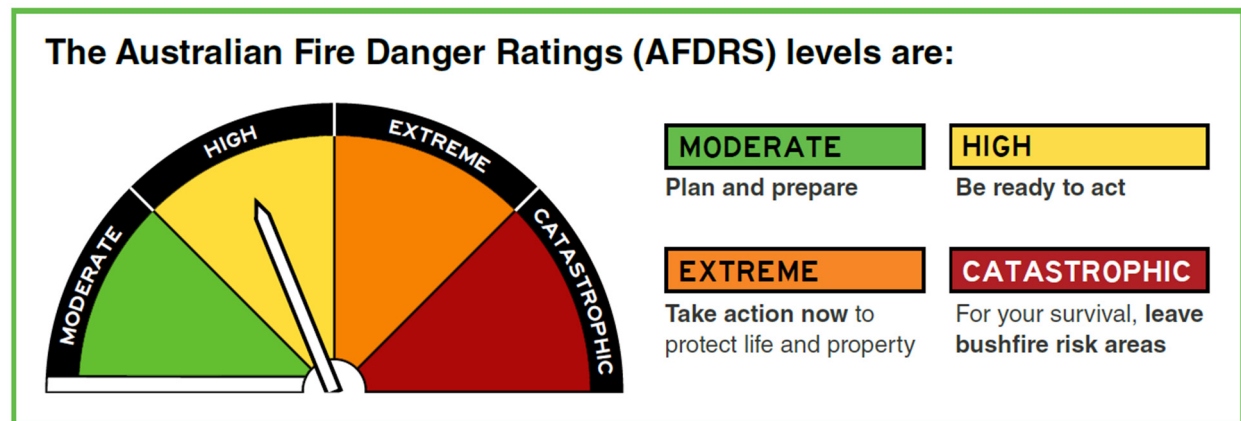
IGEM will provide an update on the development and planned approval of the strategy by the Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee in its next progress report.

Australian Fire Danger Rating System

From 1 September 2022, a nationally consistent fire danger rating system will be used in all Australian states and territories to communicate public information about fire danger ratings.

EMV has provided IGEM with a copy of the communications plan guiding the Victorian Government’s coordinated communications and engagement approach on the AFDRS.

For more information on the AFDRS, refer to afac.com.au/initiative/afdrs and cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/total-fire-bans-and-ratings/about-fire-danger-ratings



Australian Fire Danger Ratings introduced in all jurisdictions from 1 September 2022

Australian Warning System

The Australian Warning System (AWS) is a new, national approach to warnings for bushfire, flood, severe weather, extreme heat, cyclones, and other hazards using a consistent set of icons.

On behalf of Victoria’s emergency services, EMV has been allocated Australian Government funding to lead a tailored, multi-faceted AWS community education initiative, to complement the existing national campaign led by AFAC, the National Council for fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand.

For more information on the AWS, refer to australianwarningsystem.com.au

VicEmergency platforms (including emergency.vic.gov.au) were updated to reflect the new national approach in December 2021.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 12.7. EMV will conduct a review of the introduction of the first SEMP following the 2020–21 fire season, to inform any necessary changes, prior to the 2021–22 fire season.

Victoria's first SEMP was published in September 2020, superseding the State Emergency Response Plan and the State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan within the Emergency Management Manual Victoria. The SEMP sets out arrangements for emergency mitigation, response and recovery and specifies the roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency management.

During 2021 EMV led a sector review of the SEMP. The review considered learnings from the 2020–21 summer season and the COVID-19 pandemic response, as well as items held over for future consideration at the time of initial publication.

SCRC approved the revised SEMP on 7 October 2021, and further changes were incorporated in response to IGEM's Phase 2 report. Both sets of changes are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Summary of SEMP changes

<p>Revisions coming out of the review include updates to agency roles and responsibilities, the formalisation of Zone Control arrangements, and additional information on the transition to recovery.</p>	<p>Revisions in response to IGEM's 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.</p>
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The revised SEMP came into effect on 27 October 2021 and is available at emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/sempr

EMV maintains a register of items raised by sector organisations for consideration in future SEMP reviews. The next review is due to commence in late 2022 and conclude in 2023.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.2.13 Incident tier of control

In its Phase 1 report, IGEM noted that there was an inconsistency in the way incident management practices were applied between shifts and rotations throughout the 2019–20 Victorian fire season. This led to difficulties in confirming incident objectives and priorities, and inconsistencies in the application of procedures.

IGEM also found that there was a degree of variability in the way incident controllers worked with IMTs, support agencies and broader emergency management structures.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV reviews and updates shift roster and handover processes to enable greater consistency in the application of incident management practices.

FSIP1 Recommendation 13

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in partnership with agencies engaged in state, regional and incident control centres:

- a) review and update shift roster and handover processes to ensure they are procedurally consistent and support the achievement of objectives at all stages of a protracted event
- b) provide training and guidance to ensure shift roster and handover processes are consistently applied in state, regional and incident control centres.

Table 19: Status of incident tier of control actions reported as 'in progress' or 'yet to commence' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
INCIDENT TIER OF CONTROL				
FSIP1 13.1	EMV will commence work with the sector to update shift roster and handover processes including the use and application of existing incident action planning guidance and tools, as well as creation of new tools such as standardised handover templates.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 13.2	EMV will update the pre-season training content so that handover practices and processes are properly understood in state, regional and incident control centres, as well as reinforcing consistent application of incident action planning, especially during protracted and complex events.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 13.4	EMV will consider compliance auditing across a range of critical incident management practices, such as measuring progress towards achieving incident objectives and completing handovers, as part of the development of a sector-wide outcomes framework in response to the sector-wide outcomes recommendation in the Review report.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 13.5	As part of the investment in training for the sector identified in the sector capability and capacity recommendation in the review report, the Victorian Government will ensure that Incident Management Team personnel are provided with the training, exercising and simulation experiences required to effectively perform their roles and apply these processes in an environment with increasing complexities and overlapping emergencies.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV

FSIP1 13.1. EMV will commence work with the sector to update shift roster and handover processes including the use and application of existing incident action planning guidance and tools, as well as creation of new tools such as standardised handover templates.

Incident action planning

The existing JSOP 3.03 – Incident Action Planning provides guidance to responder agencies on the development of Incident Action Plans to ensure they are appropriate to each incident and effectively communicate the objective, strategies and tactics. Version 10.0 of the JSOP came into effect on 17 October 2021.

The IMT toolbox available online through the Emergency Management Common Operating Picture (EM-COP) contains existing incident action planning guidance and tools.

Handover processes and templates

The sector's online EM Learning platform training module on effective handover practices and processes includes newly-developed handover and action register templates for use during emergency events.

Identification of improvements through Real Time Monitoring and Evaluation

In October 2021 EMV updated SCRC that planning had commenced to examine a range of operational systems and processes, including handover and operational planning.

In 2022 the EMV Real Time Monitoring and Evaluation (RTM&E) team produced several Before Action Reports²⁴ that capture recent learnings in relation to handovers, rostering and incident action planning:

- Emergency Management and Planning (May 2022)
- Handovers (April 2022)
- Establishing and Managing Incident Management Teams in COVID-19 Conditions (January 2022).

Several RTM&E deployment reports from 2022 also identify insights in relation to handovers, rostering and incident action planning.

The Before Action Reports and deployment reports are available to emergency management personnel via EM-COP.

IGEM will revisit this action in its next progress report to provide an update on any improvements proposed or implemented to shift roster and handover processes resulting from RTM&E activities.

Related activity

As part of the Emergency Management Operating Model Review, EMV commissioned research into interstate and international rostering arrangements to identify potential improvements to current Victorian arrangements. Refer to the progress summary for FSIP1 Action 14.6 of this report for more information.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

²⁴ These reports consolidate learnings from previous After Action Reviews and debriefs; RTM&E Deployment Reports; local, national and international evaluation and reviews; and insights and lessons from systems such as EM-Share (the sector's lessons management platform).

FSIP1 13.2. EMV will update the pre-season training content so that handover practices and processes are properly understood in state, regional and incident control centres, as well as reinforcing consistent application of incident action planning, especially during protracted and complex events.

Handover practices and processes

As noted in the progress summary for FSIP1 Action 13.1, the sector's online EM Learning platform includes a training module on effective handover practices and processes, with newly-developed handover and action register templates for use during emergency events.

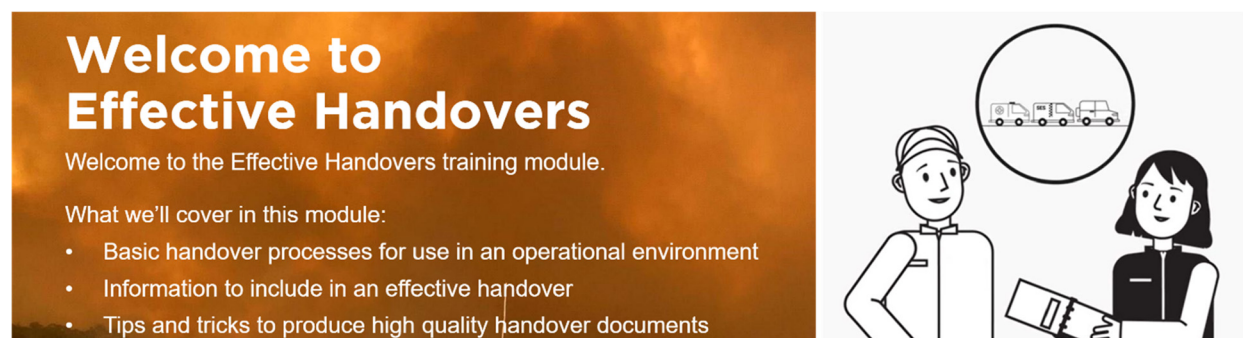
The training module is interactive and includes animations, video, and a case study to facilitate learning.

These resources complement a range of existing resources on EM-COP supporting handover processes.

Consistent application of incident action planning

EMV has not provided information on updating pre-season training content to reinforce the consistent application of incident action planning.

IGEM notes that existing incident management guidance is available to sector personnel as noted in the progress summary for FSIP1 Action 13.1. The existing 'Introduction to the Emergency Management Sector' course on EM Learning also includes guidance on incident action planning targeted at new personnel. IGEM notes that this module is unlikely to reach more experienced operational personnel to reinforce the consistent application of incident action planning.



Effective Handovers training module (Source: EMV)

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 13.4. EMV will consider compliance auditing across a range of critical incident management practices, such as measuring progress towards achieving incident objectives and completing handovers, as part of the development of a sector-wide outcomes framework in response to the sector-wide outcomes recommendation in the Review report.

The progress summary for 10YOR Action 1.3 provides information on the development of the Victorian Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Framework, being led by EMV under the Emergency Management Reform Program.

The framework includes outcomes and proposed outcome indicators for the emergency management sector, as well as for individuals, communities and businesses.

To support the move towards outcomes-based reporting, an Emergency Management Sector Outcomes Measurement Strategy to measure the collective impact of Victoria's sector is being developed under EMV's leadership.

On 30 June 2022 SCRC approved the scope and proposed approach to the strategy's development, dependent on funding and resourcing availability. Under the approach, the strategy will include a preliminary suite of outcome measures to enable baseline reporting, scheduled to commence in July 2023.

IGEM understands that outcome measures relating to critical incident management practices may be developed for inclusion and will revisit this action in its next progress report to provide an update on the strategy's development.

Related activity

As noted in the progress summary for FSIP1 Action 13.1, EMV continue to coordinate RTM&E deployments that consider incident management practices and identify potential improvements.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 13.5. As part of the investment in training for the sector identified in the sector capability and capacity recommendation in the review report, the Victorian Government will ensure that Incident Management Team personnel are provided with the training, exercising and simulation experiences required to effectively perform their roles and apply these processes in an environment with increasing complexities and overlapping emergencies.

The progress summary for 10YOR Actions 4.4 and 4.5 outlines the development of a LRAP by EMV and the sector. The LRAP builds on work during 2021 that assessed existing training and development provision to emergency management personnel and identified opportunities for improved provision and increased investment.

The LRAP aims to increase sector skills and build capability by focusing on five key areas:

- course development
- data sharing
- exercise and simulation delivery
- leadership, coaching and mentoring development
- Victorian Emergency Management Institute (VEMI)²⁵ enhancements.

The LRAP was endorsed by the EMCCSC at its meeting in September 2022.

EMV has provided IGEM with documents relating to initial procurement aligned to the LRAP, including scenario-based training software, the development of exercise scenarios, and new information technology hardware for VEMI.

IGEM will continue to monitor the investment in and development of training, exercising and simulation experiences through this action. IGEM also notes that the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2022–25 includes an action on LRAP implementation.

IGEM has a legislated function to monitor the implementation of the SAP under section 64(1)(e) of the EM Act 2013.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

²⁵ For more information refer to emv.vic.gov.au/VEMI

4.2.14 Shift rostering and fatigue and safety management

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that the events of the 2019–20 fire season placed significant strain on the existing sector capacity and capability, which had implications for the management of fatigue and the occupational health and safety of personnel.

IGEM found that the sector placed significant emphasis and resources into managing personnel fatigue, however there were inconsistencies in strategies and practices between departments and agencies. This provided an opportunity to develop common fatigue management guidance and principles.

IGEM also found that incident management practices were not uniformly applied across shifts and rotations throughout that fire season, which led to difficulties in confirming incident objectives and priorities and inconsistencies in the application of procedures.

To address this, IGEM recommended the development of a system to manage personnel and asset deployments to all tiers of incident management to both meet the needs of the emergency and support the health and wellbeing of personnel.

FSIP1 Recommendation 14

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in consultation with relevant agencies – develop a system to manage personnel and asset deployments to all tiers of incident management to meet the needs of the emergency and support the health and wellbeing of personnel. Where appropriate and within occupational health and safety requirements, this may include:

- a) standardised shift rosters across agencies and incident management tiers
- b) a single or integrated platform to allow consistent recording of shift times and locations
- c) records of accreditation, qualification, training and currency.

Table 20: Status of shift rostering and fatigue and safety management actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
SHIFT ROSTERING AND FATIGUE AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT				
FSIP1 14.2	EMV will as a priority, develop common incident resourcing principles to maximise deployment and resourcing, along with a fit for purpose safety management system that can integrate information from across agencies.	December 2021	Closed	EMV
FSIP1 14.3	EMV will work with the sector to update and re-issue the multi-agency Fatigue Management Safety Fact Sheet and include fatigue management content within pre-season briefings.	December 2020	Closed	EMV
FSIP1 14.4	As part of the development of a contemporary emergency management operating model identified in the response to the sector capability and capacity recommendation of the Review report, EMV will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop sector guidelines that optimise deployment; service delivery; employee health; and wellbeing. These guidelines will seek to enhance consistency where appropriate, while supporting an agile and diverse workforce. 	June 2022	In progress	EMV

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FSIP1 14.5	EMV will work with the sector to develop and implement a robust system for Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) incident management.	June 2021	In progress (overdue)	EMV
FSIP1 14.6	EMV will initiate research into interstate and international rostering and resourcing management arrangements, to identify potential improvements or alternative models to the current Victorian arrangements.	June 2022	Complete	EMV

FSIP1 14.2. EMV will as a priority, develop common incident resourcing principles to maximise deployment and resourcing, along with a fit for purpose safety management system that can integrate information from across agencies.

Common incident resourcing principles

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that detailed standalone Strategic Resource Plans may be implemented for specific incidents depending on the complexity of resourcing required to support operations. Strategic Resource Plans specify that prioritisation occurs in accordance with the existing State Emergency Management Priorities, including protection of life and property, and protection of critical infrastructure.

EMV advised that no further activity is planned for this part of the action.

The existing JSOP 3.09 – Resource Request Process guides the process of requesting resources for all major emergencies.

Safety management system

EMV advised that it no longer intends to create a sector-wide safety management system due to the various employment arrangements of agencies. IGEM notes that the recently established Safety Coordination and Capability Group provides a sector forum to promote a coordinated approach to safety management.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is closed with no further activity planned.

FSIP1 14.3. EMV will work with the sector to update and re-issue the multi-agency Fatigue Management Safety Fact Sheet and include fatigue management content within pre-season briefings.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that EMV planned to reissue an updated fatigue management fact sheet before the 2021–22 summer season. IGEM understands that this did not occur and that EMV has no immediate plan to reissue an updated fact sheet.

IGEM notes that the original fact sheet and agency-specific guidance remain available via EM-COP. EMV also hosts a fatigue management module on the EM Learning platform.

IGEM also positively notes the establishment of Safety Coordination and Capability Group to address mutual safety issues, including fatigue management, across the sector.

Pre-season briefings

The 2021–22 pre-season preparedness briefings were held online, with a theme of Safety and Fatigue. Presenters were invited from all sector tiers and organisations, with many reinforcing messaging around safety and fatigue for emergency services staff and volunteers. The sessions were well attended by sector partners across a variety of organisations and sector roles.

IGEM notes that key safety information reflecting the current operational environment is made available to agencies via the rolling State Operations Plan available on EM-COP.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is partially implemented with no further activity planned.

FSIP1 14.4. As part of the development of a contemporary emergency management operating model identified in the response to the sector capability and capacity recommendation of the Review report, EMV will:

- **develop sector guidelines that optimise deployment; service delivery; employee health; and wellbeing. These guidelines will seek to enhance consistency where appropriate, while supporting an agile and diverse workforce.**

The progress summary for 10YOR Action 4.3 covers the EMV-led review of Victoria's emergency management operating model.

Specific proposals for implementation arising from the review remain under development and are subject to future consideration and approval by government. IGEM understands that there is scope for sector guidelines as envisaged by this action to be included in the proposals and will provide an update on this action in its next progress report.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action remains in progress subject to the outcomes of the Emergency Management Operating Model Review.

FSIP1 14.5. EMV will work with the sector to develop and implement a robust system for Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) incident management.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that EMV had commenced the development of a software system to provide an aggregated view of reported OH&S incidents and enable the identification and analysis of developing agency trends.

Agencies have supported the development of a shared single-point OH&S incident notification dashboard since 2016, with the project originally co-funded by DELWP, CFA, FRV (formerly Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board), VICSES and EMV.

Agencies commenced operational testing of the system in July 2021. In October 2021 EMV updated SCRC that further work was required to ensure the system delivered up-to-date visibility and analysis of OH&S incidents during major events.

The system is accessible to OH&S personnel via EM-COP. EMV provided IGEM with system screenshots and information on its testing during 2022.

IGEM understands that testing of the system remains ongoing and will revisit this action in its next progress report.

Finding

IGEM notes progress on this action and that it is overdue.

FSIP1 14.6. EMV will initiate research into interstate and international rostering and resourcing management arrangements, to identify potential improvements or alternative models to the current Victorian arrangements.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that research and analysis into rostering and resource management arrangements of other jurisdictions would form part of the Operating Model Review being led by EMV.

The progress summary for 10YOR Action 4.3 provides more information on the review.

As part of the review, EMV engaged consultants to produce an Emergency Management Operating Model Review Consultation Report (November 2021).

The consultation report includes extensive research on rostering and resource management arrangements in other jurisdictions to identify potential improvements to current Victorian arrangements and inform stakeholder input to the review.

For example, the consultation report:

- benchmarks IMT capacity across comparable jurisdictions
- provides case studies and analysis of IMT models and structures in overseas jurisdictions
- profiles the use of mobile incident control centres in other jurisdictions
- identifies alternative resourcing arrangements (including volunteer resourcing) and business and non-government organisation network models from other jurisdictions.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

4.2.15 Emergency management capacity

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that the extended duration and severity of the events of the 2019–20 fire season placed significant strain on the sector's existing capacity and capability, including surge capacity.

The availability of resources for deployment to eastern Victoria was impacted by fires in other jurisdictions as well the need to maintain sufficient resources across the rest of Victoria to respond to events.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV and the sector develop a capacity model that considers current and future career and volunteer emergency management personnel requirements, surge requirements, and emergency risks and climate scenarios.

FSIP1 Recommendation 15

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria collaborate with the emergency management sector to develop a capacity model that considers current and future:

- a) career and volunteer emergency management personnel requirements
- b) identified and trained personnel for surge requirements
- c) emergency risks and climate scenarios.

Table 21: Status of emergency management capacity actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CAPACITY				
FSIP1 15.2	EMV and sector partners have been and will continue to utilise the Victorian Preparedness Framework to assess the capability and inform capacity requirements required to plan for, withstand and recover from emergencies.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 15.3	Local Government Victoria will continue its work with local government authorities to implement its Councils and Emergencies Project. This multi-year project utilises the Victorian Preparedness Framework to model capability and capacity of local government in emergency management.	December 2021	Complete	DJPR
FSIP1 15.5	The sector, supported by EMV's leadership, commits to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencing a review of the current training and accreditation program for incident management personnel and critical emergency management roles, that informs an action plan supporting the building and sustainment of the sector's capability requirements into the future. 	June 2021	Complete	EMV
FSIP1 15.8	As part of the development of a contemporary emergency management operating model identified in the response to the Review, EMV will work with the sector to review workforce needs, to inform the design of a capability model that incorporates strategic recruitment, accreditation and retention, in paid and volunteer workforces. This model will focus on new opportunities to educate the sector, providing leadership development pathways for all personnel. This review will also identify investment required in infrastructure, systems, governance and processes.	June 2022	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 15.10	EMV will work with climate scientists to undertake a review of emergency risks under climate scenarios across a range of hazard types to inform future capacity requirements.	October 2021 June 2023 (revised)	In progress	EMV

FSIP1 15.2. EMV and sector partners have been and will continue to utilise the Victorian Preparedness Framework to assess the capability and inform capacity requirements required to plan for, withstand and recover from emergencies.

The Victorian Preparedness Framework

The VPF – first published in 2017 and updated in 2018 – identifies and describes 21 core capabilities and the related critical tasks required to manage emergencies in Victoria. These core capabilities and critical tasks set the foundation for how the state prepares for, responds to, and recovers from emergencies. The VPF is available at emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/emergency-management-capability-in-victoria/victorian-preparedness-framework

BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER	
Planning	
Community Information and Warnings	
Operational Management	
Intelligence and Information Sharing	
Public Order and Community Safety	
Building Community Resilience	
BEFORE AND DURING	
Fire Management and Suppression	
DURING AND AFTER	
Fatality Management	
Critical Transport	
Logistics and Supply Chain Management	
Impact Assessment	
DURING	AFTER
Search and Rescue	Economic Recovery
Health Protection	Natural and Cultural Heritage Rehabilitation
Health Emergency Response	Built Recovery
Relief Assistance	Social Recovery
Environmental Response	Assurance and Learning

Victoria's 21 emergency management capabilities (Source: EMV)

Capability assessments

EMV and sector partners use the VPF to assess the capability requirements and inform the capacity requirements needed to plan for, withstand and recover from emergencies.

The updated VPF outlines a process to compare estimated levels of capability against specified capability targets so that gaps may be identified. The process then seeks to establish where additional capability and capacity is available to assist with identified gaps, including state, interstate and international arrangements, or additional expected volunteer capability.

The Emergency Management Capability and Capacity Project coordinated by EMV uses three methodologies to assess capabilities:

- agency self-assessments (maturity assessments)
- assessments against capability targets developed by the sector (physical assessments)
- exercise/real event assessments.

EMV and the agencies leading each assessment regularly update the EMCCSC on progress.

During 2021–22 EMV and sector partners advanced the assessment of four capabilities:

- Operational Management
- Fire Management and Suppression
- Fatality Management
- Search and Rescue.

EMV is currently sourcing additional data to improve the Operational Management assessment, with the intention that following this, all four assessments are presented to SCRC for approval. EMV has developed a summary report template that can be updated as each assessment is completed and provides a consistent view of findings across assessments.

IGEM notes some of the challenges the project faces, including the need for cross-sector coordination involving large numbers of stakeholders and the impact of operational pressures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies.

EMV plans to coordinate the assessment of all 21 capabilities, in collaboration with relevant sector departments and agencies, by December 2024.

Victorian Preparedness Framework Review

On 11 August 2022 SCRC approved an updated VPF to replace the current published version. The progress summary for 10YOR Action 4.8 provides information on the review process that informed the update.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 15.3. Local Government Victoria will continue its work with local government authorities to implement its Councils and Emergencies Project. This multi-year project utilises the Victorian Preparedness Framework to model capability and capacity of local government in emergency management.

Local Government Victoria – a division of DJPR – is addressing this action through the third and final stage of the Councils and Emergencies Project.

Previous phases of the project have clarified the emergency management responsibilities and activities of local government (Phase One) and assessed the emergency management capability and capacity of councils (Phase Two).

Phase Three, which is now also complete, involved engagement with councils and other emergency management sector organisations to identify potential actions to address the local government capability and capacity gaps identified during Phase Two.

In 2021 DJPR procured a consultant to run engagement sessions and interviews with councils and sector organisations. Based on these sessions, the consultant produced a draft report that:

- confirmed the capability and capacity issues councils face in carrying out their emergency management responsibilities across the five VPF core capability elements: people, resources, governance, systems and processes (refer to Figure 4 for examples)
- identified potential actions to address the issues.

In September 2021 DJPR provided the draft report to councils and agencies for their review and facilitated a forum to update council CEOs on the project and to discuss the findings of the consultation report. DJPR incorporated feedback received from councils and the CEO forum into the report.

On 18 November 2021 the EMCCSC noted the consultation report and endorsed the completion of the Councils and Emergencies Project. On 2 December 2021, the SCRC noted the consultation report, the project closure report, and the completion of the project.

The *Councils & Emergencies Phase Three Regional Consultation Report* (June 2021) is available at localgovernment.vic.gov.au/resilience-and-emergency-management/councils-and-emergencies-project

Figure 4: Capability and capacity issues identified in the phase 3 consultation report.

CORE CAPABILITY ELEMENTS	CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY ISSUES
People	Lack of trained staff for emergency management Challenges with balancing emergency management responsibilities with BAU roles Loss of organisational knowledge and impacts to capability due to high staff turnover
Resources	Outdated relief and recovery centres Lack of transport resources
Governance	Inconsistent funding arrangements Relationship with agencies and the broader emergency management sector Emergency management budget allocation within councils
Systems	Lack of standardised training for emergency management Lack of standardised IT platforms
Processes	Unstandardised and inconsistent processes Challenges with maintaining community engagement in emergency management

Councils and Emergencies Project implementation

DJPR originally planned to produce a standalone local government capability and capacity framework and action plan. However, in consultation with MAV, DJPR decided that embedding priority actions into the SAP 2022–25 would provide the best mechanism for all departments and agencies to work together to ensure their successful delivery.

SCRC approved the SAP 2022–25 on 11 August 2022, including actions directly related to local government capability and capacity.

DJPR plan to provide a final briefing to the next EMCCSC meeting, scheduled for September 2022, to advise about the arrangements for ongoing delivery of the SAP local government actions now that the Councils and Emergencies Project has concluded.

IGEM has a legislated function to monitor the implementation of the SAP under Section 64(1)(e) of the EM Act 2013.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 15.5. The sector, supported by EMV's leadership, commits to:

- **Commencing a review of the current training and accreditation program for incident management personnel and critical emergency management roles, that informs an action plan supporting the building and sustainment of the sector's capability requirements into the future.**

Refer to the progress summary for 10YOR Action 4.4 for information on the review and development of the action plan.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 15.8. As part of the development of a contemporary emergency management operating model identified in the response to the Review, EMV will work with the sector to review workforce needs, to inform the design of a capability model that incorporates strategic recruitment, accreditation and retention, in paid and volunteer workforces. This model will focus on new opportunities to educate the sector, providing leadership development pathways for all personnel. This review will also identify investment required in infrastructure, systems, governance and processes.

The review of Victoria's emergency management operating model is one of four projects under the Emergency Management Reform Program led by EMV. Refer to 10YOR Action 4.3 for more information on the review process.

As part of the review, EMV engaged consultants to analyse workforce needs.

The consultation report (November 2021) examines various aspects of the current operating model, including:

- how to enable surge workforce participation across the Victorian Public Service through improved systems
- issues with the IMT training and accreditation system and alternative models for IMTs
- how the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System functions in the Victorian context
- opportunities to clarify and simplify control functions at the state and regional tier
- the contribution of emergency risk assessment processes to assessing future workforce demand
- issues with procurement processes during emergencies
- opportunities to better leverage the capacity and resources of non-government organisations and businesses to support emergency management functions.

The report identifies that the sector needs to invest further effort to understand future workforce demand and proposed the establishment of a workforce planning function.

The report also includes an analysis of Victoria's control centre infrastructure – refer to 10YOR Action 4.2 for more information.

EMV presented feedback from sector stakeholders on the consultation report's proposals and findings to SCRC on 17 February 2022, followed by targeted consultation with departmental secretaries and agency heads in mid-2022.

Specific proposals for implementation arising from the Operating Model Review remain under development and are subject to future consideration and approval by government. IGEM understands that there is scope for a capability model as envisaged by this action to be included in the proposals, noting that the implementation of specific proposals are subject to dedicated funding being available.

IGEM notes that governance is the focus of another project under the Emergency Management Reform Program – the governance review is due to be completed by December 2022.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action remains in progress subject to the outcomes of the Emergency Management Operating Model Review.

FSIP1 15.10. EMV will work with climate scientists to undertake a review of emergency risks under climate scenarios across a range of hazard types to inform future capacity requirements.

EMV is addressing this action through Phase 1 of the Victorian Emergency Risk Assessment project.

Historically, as IGEM noted in the 10 Year Review and the Phase 1 Report, the review of state-level emergency risks has occurred irregularly and with inconsistent methodology.

The VERA project aims to develop a risk assessment methodology based on Australian and international best practice and produce a consistent, repeatable risk assessment process. Risk assessments will incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data and incorporate climate change modelling and predictions.

EMV provided IGEM evidence of its work with DELWP, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, and CSIRO to incorporate climate change data into risk assessments.

This work is in its early stages and IGEM will revisit this action in its next progress report.

EMV's Chief Executive has approved a revised due date for this action of June 2023.

For more information on the VERA project, refer to 10YOR Action 2.6.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is in the early stages of development, noting a revised due date was approved by EMV's Chief Executive.

4.2.16 Cross-border interoperability

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that opportunities existed at state, national and international levels to continue to improve interoperability, including shared training, policies, and procedures to improve consistency and increase the effectiveness of resource sharing.

IGEM recommended that EMV and the sector work with New South Wales and South Australia to identify and address key cross-border operational and resource management issues to improve interoperability and maximise capability and capacity when cooperating during cross border emergencies.

FSIP1 Recommendation 16

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria works with the emergency management sector and relevant emergency management entities in New South Wales and South Australia to identify and address key cross border operational and resource management issues. This engagement should aim to enhance interoperability and maximise the capability and capacity of agencies to work together during emergencies along Victoria's borders.

Table 22: Status of cross-border interoperability actions reported as 'in progress' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
CROSS-BORDER INTEROPERABILITY				
FSIP1 16.2	EMV will lead a sector review to ensure cohesive and consistent warnings and advice messages are broadcast along borders.	December 2020 2023 (revised)	Complete	EMV
FSIP1 16.3	EMV will work closely with relevant stakeholders in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania to implement improvements in emergency preparedness and response, including formalising procedures for deployment of liaison officers across borders.	January 2021 June 2022 (revised)	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 16.4	Prior to the 2020–21 fire season, EMV will work with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and the Victorian Cross-Border Commissioner to clarify emergency management roles and responsibilities of the Victorian Cross-Border Commissioner. Building on this, the EMC will partner with the Cross-Border Commissioner to strengthen interstate relationships in relation to emergency management arrangements.	November 2020	Complete	EMV
FSIP1 16.5	The EMC will continue to strengthen the interests of Victoria through representation on the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee in relation to the Arrangement for Interstate Assistance.	Ongoing	Complete	EMV
FSIP1 16.6	EMV and the sector will identify cross-border risks and opportunities through the Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Planning processes.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 16.7	EMV commits to undertaking scenario exercises with cross-border emergency management partners to foster interoperability and stronger relationships between states.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 16.8	Victoria will work with other states to ensure interoperability of systems and standardised tools as far as possible, to support cross border assistance.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV

FSIP1 16.2. EMV will lead a sector review to ensure cohesive and consistent warnings and advice messages are broadcast along borders.

Sector review

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted the completion of two consultants reports in June 2021:

- **Cross Border Communication in Natural Disasters: Situation Report (June 2021)** – provides an overview of the information needs of cross border communities and provides options for future consultation with cross border communities on communications issues.
- **Cross Border Communication Literature Review (June 2021)** – summarises recent relevant inquiries, research, and submissions from individuals, community groups and local government on cross border communication issues.

EMV engaged with sector partners and councils along Victoria's borders on the review, including holding two sector workshops on cross border communications in September 2021 – one involving fire agencies from Victoria, NSW and South Australia, and the other involving state emergency services from these states.

EMV provided the Cross Border Communication in Natural Disasters Situation Report to the Victorian Cross Border Commissioner's office for consideration to inform future cross border MoUs.

Australian Warning System and Australian Fire Danger Rating System

IGEM notes that implementation of the new Australian Warning System and Australian Fire Danger Rating System in Victoria and neighbouring states supports the issuing of consistent warnings and advice messages to border communities.

EMV is leading the implementation of both systems in Victoria. For more information refer to the progress summary for FSIP1 Action 12.6 and the following websites: australianwarningsystem.com.au and cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/total-fire-bans-and-ratings/about-fire-danger-ratings

Related activity

To further ensure cohesive and consistent warnings and advice messages are broadcast along borders, EMV has:

- worked with emergency management sector partners to develop the new role of Cross Border Emergency Management Liaison Officer. The key accountabilities of the role include connecting public information and public liaison teams to ensure consistency of warnings and advice, incident messaging and community information (refer to FSIP1 Action 16.3).
- led work to update the Victorian Warning Arrangements in 2021 which include considerations for issuing and managing community warnings across borders.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 16.3. EMV will work closely with relevant stakeholders in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania to implement improvements in emergency preparedness and response, including formalising procedures for deployment of liaison officers across borders.

In October 2021 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of June 2022 due to COVID-19 pandemic related delays to engagement with multiple interstate and intrastate stakeholders, exacerbated by funding and resource constraints.

Improvements in emergency preparedness and response

EMV continues to engage with cross border emergency management committees such as:

- the Tri-State Emergency Management Cross Border Liaison Committee
- the Upper Murray Cross Border Fire Coordinating Committee
- the Eastern Coordinating Committee
- the Far South West Coordinating Committee.

These committees cover both New South Wales and South Australian borders and have an interoperability focus. EMV provided IGEM with examples of meeting minutes demonstrating a focus on improvements in emergency preparedness and response.

Cross Border Emergency Management Liaison Officers

To further strengthen interoperability and interstate relationships during border emergency events, EMV is developing a new role of Cross Border Emergency Management Liaison Officer (CB EMLO) to assist incident management teams in neighbouring jurisdictions.

EMV intends to finalise the CB EMLO role statement by the end of 2022, pending agency approval.

Related activity

The EMC is Victoria's representative on AFAC's Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee (CCOSC). Among other issues, the committee considers formal arrangements for interstate resource sharing (refer to FSIP1 Action 16.5).



Victorian emergency services personnel support the New South Wales flood emergency (Source: EMV)

Finding

IGEM notes progress on this action, noting a revised due date was approved by SCRC.

FSIP1 16.4. Prior to the 2020–21 fire season, EMV will work with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and the Victorian Cross-Border Commissioner to clarify emergency management roles and responsibilities of the Victorian Cross-Border Commissioner. Building on this, the EMC will partner with the Cross-Border Commissioner to strengthen interstate relationships in relation to emergency management arrangements.

Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner works with residents, businesses and community organisations along the state's borders to identify and advocate for change. The Cross Border Commissioner is retained administratively as part of DJPR and works with interstate counterparts, including the NSW Cross Border Commissioner. IGEM notes that a MoU with NSW is now in place. The Cross Border Commissioner will also work with the inaugural South Australia Cross Border Commissioner, who is expected to be appointed in late 2022. For more information refer to rdv.vic.gov.au/about-rdv/cross-border-commissioner

The Cross Border Commissioner's emergency management roles and responsibilities

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted initial work on this action by both EMV and DJPR, culminating in a report with recommendations on the Cross Border Commissioner's emergency management roles and responsibilities. DJPR's Cross Border Emergency Management Arrangements Reference Group endorsed the report on 13 July 2021.

DJPR provided the report to the EMC on 15 November 2021. The EMC replied on 11 February 2022, confirming EMV's support for its four recommendations and noting that (in line with a recommendation from the report) the role of the Cross Border Commissioner would be incorporated as appropriate in the next version of the SEMP.

EMV provided IGEM evidence of meetings between the Cross Border Commissioner and the EMC (the subject of another recommendation from the report), and between the Cross Border Commissioner's office and EMV's Cross Border and Preparedness Unit.

The other recommendations relate to the Cross Border Commissioner's membership on key sector committees²⁶ and the role's promotion as a subject matter expert on cross border community issues for consultation by emergency management planning and recovery committees.

Strengthening interstate relationships

EMV provided IGEM with information on one example of its ongoing work to address the second element of this action – partnership between the EMC and the Cross Border Commissioner to strengthen interstate relationships in relation to emergency management arrangements.

The New South Wales and Victoria MoU for Cross-Border Collaboration (2019–21) reflects the commitment of both jurisdictions to strengthen collaboration. It is specifically designed to address a range of cross border issues, with each state commissioner playing an integral role in implementing the MoU.

Sitting under the MoU are a series of work plans, including one for a cross border approach to safe and resilient communities, with actions for implementation by agencies in both states, including EMV and NSW emergency management agencies.

EMV provided IGEM with evidence of its engagement with the Cross Border Commissioner's office on the emergency management actions in the work plan. A number of the work plan actions relate to the program of interstate work being led by EMV's Cross Border and Preparedness Unit and correspond to progress of other FSIP1 Recommendation 16 actions.

IGEM understands that an extension to the MoU is currently being arranged between both state governments.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

²⁶ The State Emergency Management Team, State Coordination Team, and State Relief and Recovery Team. The SEMP outlines the role and function of each committee.

FSIP1 16.5. The EMC will continue to strengthen the interests of Victoria through representation on the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee in relation to the Arrangement for Interstate Assistance.

Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee

The CCOSC of AFAC was established in 2013 to provide jurisdictional consideration and representation of emergency service operational matters focused on interstate and international resource sharing. CCOSC is also a coordinating group for the sharing of jurisdictional resources.

The EMC represents Victoria on CCOSC, which meets formally three times a year.

Arrangement for Interstate Assistance

The Arrangement for Interstate Assistance is a key framework for sharing fire and emergency service resources between Australian states and territories, and New Zealand.

As core doctrine, CCOSC meetings regularly consider a range of matters related to the arrangements.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 16.6. EMV and the sector will identify cross-border risks and opportunities through the Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Planning processes.

Regional-level planning

In November 2020 the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services issued the Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

The guidelines state that REMPs are designed to provide a clear set of arrangements to contextualise the SEMP and the other plans within the region. Among other requirements, REMPs:

- establish arrangements to manage emergency events that may cross regional boundaries or state borders
- identify and plan for cross-agency/cross-boundary/cross border training and exercising opportunities
- identify and plan for cross-agency/cross-boundary/cross border community engagement and education opportunities.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that all REMPs included a section on cross border considerations. The inaugural REMPs were published in November 2020 and IGEM considers that there is potential for future REMP versions to develop and expand these sections, taking into account any relevant findings from the Regional Emergency Risk Assessment (RERA) project led by EMV (refer to 10YOR Action 2.6).

All Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees are due to complete reviews of their REMPs by November 2023.

Municipal-level planning

The Guidelines for Preparing State, Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans state that MEMPs will contain similar considerations and arrangements as those outlined for REMPs, however they will be specific to the municipal district. The guidelines also highlight that MEMPs are likely to be more operational and tactical in nature than REMPs.

Existing MEMPs are being progressively updated in accordance with their three-year review cycles, with all MEMPs due to be reviewed by 1 December 2023 under the new arrangements (refer to 10YOR Action 2.5). IGEM will provide an update on this action in its next progress report and assess how cross border risks and opportunities are being considered through municipal emergency management planning processes.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 16.7. EMV commits to undertaking scenario exercises with cross-border emergency management partners to foster interoperability and stronger relationships between states.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that EMV's Cross Border and Preparedness Unit met with Emergency Management Australia in July 2021 to pursue opportunities for cross border training and exercises, and discuss setting up a network for this purpose. EMV advised that it met again with Emergency Management Australia in December 2021 and was awaiting further advice from them, which is leading to the establishment of the cross border training network.

EMV has also established a Cross Border Exercise Calendar on EM-COP to assist in the identification and planning of exercises by all sector partners.

EMV plans to work with sector partners, through the cross border committees, to identify opportunities to exercise cross border agreements to support interoperability. IGEM will provide an update on this work in its next progress report.

Finding

IGEM notes progress on this action.

FSIP1 16.8. Victoria will work with other states to ensure interoperability of systems and standardised tools as far as possible, to support cross border assistance.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that EMV is addressing this action by developing a Cross Border Emergency Management Framework containing three levels of new agreements:

- a principle-based MoU between jurisdictions
- Mutual Aid Agreements between jurisdictional agencies (at a statewide level)
- Joint Operational Guidelines between local agencies who require direct cross border interoperability.

EMV plans to work with the committees and agencies on modernising their pre-existing agreements as they come up for renewal over the next 12 to 24 months to bring them into alignment with the new framework.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

4.2.17 Vulnerable communities

IGEM's Phase 1 report found that the methods used to assist vulnerable people to access and understand emergency information were limited to the Translating and Interpreting Service or the National Relay service, and the use of AUSLAN interpreters during media conferences.

IGEM also noted that tourists might face greater risk in an emergency as they may:

- be unaware of the fire risk at their destination
- not be checking emergency information
- be unfamiliar with local place names and geography
- lack local support networks.

To address this, IGEM recommended that EMV develops and implements processes for disseminating information to all Victorians and tourists in an emergency event.

FSIP1 Recommendation 17

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the emergency management sector – develops and implements processes to ensure greater dissemination and improved understanding of information for all Victorians, and visitors to Victoria in an emergency event. This should consider but not be exclusive to individuals who:

- a) are not familiar with Victoria and its environment
- b) find it difficult to understand and respond to emergency information
- c) are socially or geographically isolated.

Table 23: Status of vulnerable communities actions reported as 'in progress' or 'yet to commence' in 2021

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES				
FSIP1 17.1	EMV will enhance the VicEmergency app and website to better accommodate needs of CALD communities ahead of the 2020–21 fire season.	January 2021 April 2023 (revised)	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 17.2	Before the 2021–22 financial year, EMV - in collaboration with agencies - will review and update the Victorian Warning Protocol, Joint Standard Operating Procedure 4.01– Public Information and Warnings, and other guidelines and documentation, to incorporate the findings of the IGEM Inquiry.	June 2021 June 2022 (revised)	Complete	EMV
FSIP1 17.3	Victoria will continue to take the lead in working with other states and territories to agree to, and seek national funding for, enhancements to the Emergency Alert platform. These enhancements will allow translation into languages other than English to better reach CALD communities.	Ongoing	In progress	EMV

NO.	ACTION	DUE DATE	STATUS	LEAD AGENCY
FSIP1 17.4	The Victorian Government will investigate options for disseminating critical information across a range of emergencies in multiple languages, building on lessons learned from both the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic. Enhancements will improve translation capabilities (such as better pre-formed messaging and using more symbols where appropriate) and accessibility, including text-to-voice opportunities.	October 2021	In progress	EMV
FSIP1 17.5	Victoria will look to partner with the Commonwealth and target it's \$37.1 million package to strengthen telecommunications resilience in socially and geographically isolated communities in bushfire and disaster-prone areas. This could include investment in upgrading alternative power sources and improving NBN satellite services in rural and country fires services and designated evacuation areas.	June 2023	In progress	DJPR
FSIP1 17.6	To support dissemination and improved individual and community awareness of the impacts, disruptions and closures to the road network due to emergencies, DoT will seek funding to upgrade and modernise the VicTraffic App. This will enable integration with existing modern digital platforms to create centralised, up-to-date disruption information and journey planning; meet surge demand during emergencies; and support individuals and communities to make timely decisions about their safety, including those unfamiliar with road networks.	June 2021 (seek funding) June 2023 (completion) June 2024 (completion - revised)	In progress	DoT

FSIP1 17.1. EMV will enhance the VicEmergency app and website to better accommodate needs of CALD communities ahead of the 2020–21 fire season.

The 2020–21 Victorian State Budget included \$4m to support the maintenance and upgrade of VicEmergency and EM-COP. This action initially envisaged implementation ahead of the 2020–21 fire season, however EMV advised that activity is being expanded to better accommodate the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

IGEM's 2021 progress report noted that in July 2021 the EMV program board endorsed the VicEmergency Uplift project concept brief to improve the website and mobile app. One element of the uplift project is; improving communication to CALD communities through the development of translation capabilities for selected languages.

EMV provided IGEM with a June 2022 project update covering procurement activities since April 2022 and indicating commencement of the next phase (proof-of-concept work with the chosen vendors of a mobile app that provides real-time translations from English into two languages) from August 2022.

On 30 June 2022 SCRC approved a revised due date for this action of April 2023. EMV informed SCRC that a business case would need to be developed to support upgrades.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by SCRC.

FSIP1 17.2. Before the 2021–22 financial year, EMV - in collaboration with agencies - will review and update the Victorian Warning Protocol, Joint Standard Operating Procedure 4.01– Public Information and Warnings, and other guidelines and documentation, to incorporate the findings of the IGEM Inquiry.

In June 2022 SCRC approved a revised date for this action of June 2022.

EMV updated the Victorian Warning Protocol (now known as the Victorian Warning Arrangements) in August 2021 and JSOP 4.01 – Public Information and Warnings in October 2021.

The Victorian Warning Arrangements provide emergency response agencies with coordinated and consistent direction for providing information and warnings to the Victorian community and are available at emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/victorias-warning-system/victorian-warning-arrangements

All JSOPs are available at files-em.em.vic.gov.au/public/JSOP/EMV-JSOP.htm

Joint Standard Operating Procedure 4.02

As part reviewing and improving doctrine, in July 2022 EMV published a new JSOP 4.02 – Public Information and Warnings for Class 2 Emergencies.²⁷ JSOP 4.02 provides guidance to all control agency personnel, and those supporting agency personnel in disseminating public information and warnings during the response to and recovery from Class 2 emergencies. The JSOP sets out that warnings are to be accessible by being provided through multiple channels and written in plain language.

Other guidelines and documentation

EMV maintains a hierarchy of doctrine from authorising environments (such as the EM Act 2013, SEMP and SEMP sub-plans) to procedural documents (such as JSOPs). EMV advised that it reconsiders the documents in the hierarchy when a review or inquiry highlights changes for public communication.

EMV provided IGEM with two examples of other guidelines and documentation it has reviewed and updated in response to IGEM’s Phase 1 report:

- **SCC Public Information Concept of Operations** – reviewed in March 2022 – outlines the structure and roles of the State Control Centre (SCC) new full-time public information function. The SCC public information function focuses on gathering, assembling, and disseminating timely, tailored and relevant information, to support and encourage appropriate responses and proactive measures in communities that are directly or likely to be affected by an incident or emergency.
- **Guides for Warning Issuers** – EMV has created guides for issuers to provide clarity on the warning levels and associated actions advised for different hazard types and to align with the new AWS (refer to FSIP1 Action 16.8).

IGEM notes that the revised documents do not directly reference vulnerable communities or tourists, however Phase 1 report Recommendation 17 does relate to 'all Victorians'. IGEM further notes that other actions under Recommendation 17 cater for these groups.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action has been implemented.

FSIP1 17.3. Victoria will continue to take the lead in working with other states and territories to agree to, and seek national funding for, enhancements to the Emergency Alert platform. These enhancements will allow translation into languages other than English to better reach CALD communities.

²⁷ A Class 2 emergency is a major emergency which is not a Class 1 emergency (a major fire or any other major emergency for which FRV, CFA or VICSES is the control agency under the SEMP) or a warlike act or act of terrorism, whether directed at Victoria or as part of any other state or territory or Commonwealth, or a hi-jack, siege or riot.

Translation requirements for the Emergency Alert platform will be discussed at the September 2022 Emergency Alert High Level Group meeting. The group comprises senior Australian, state and territory government emergency management communications officials.

EMV advised that the discussions will focus on operational, commercial and technical considerations.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is in the early stages of development.

FSIP1 17.4. The Victorian Government will investigate options for disseminating critical information across a range of emergencies in multiple languages, building on lessons learned from both the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic. Enhancements will improve translation capabilities (such as better pre-formed messaging and using more symbols where appropriate) and accessibility, including text-to-voice opportunities.

Refer to the progress summary for Action 17.1 for information on how EMV is addressing this action through the VicEmergency Uplift project.

In relation to the reference in this action to lessons learned from the 2019–20 Victorian bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic, IGEM positively notes that the VicEmergency Uplift project refers to Phase 1 report recommendation, reflecting the observation that communications need to be accessible to CALD communities.

In June 2022 EMV advised SCRC that the timelines for delivery of this action are dependent upon funding and the outcomes of FSIP1 Action 17.1.

IGEM will continue to monitor this action alongside FSIP1 Action 17.1 and provide an update in its next progress report.

Finding

IGEM notes progress on this action, noting that timelines for delivery of this action are dependent on FSIP1 Action 17.1.

FSIP1 17.5. Victoria will look to partner with the Commonwealth and target its \$37.1 million package to strengthen telecommunications resilience in socially and geographically isolated communities in bushfire and disaster-prone areas. This could include investment in upgrading alternative power sources and improving NBN satellite services in rural and country fires services and designated evacuation areas.

DJPR has partnered with the Australian Government to identify and propose appropriate Victorian sites for the \$37.1m Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND) program. The program aims to strengthen telecommunications resilience in socially and geographically isolated communities in bushfire and disaster-prone areas. This program has led to the following upgrades.

National Broadband Network (NBN) satellite services program

Under the STAND program, the Australian Government allocated \$7m to deliver 2000 STAND NBN satellite community Wi-Fi services nationally, including 344 sites in Victoria. Satellite community Wi-Fi facilities provide communities with an additional layer of redundancy for communications during emergency events when commercial NBN fixed and mobile networks fail.

As of August 2022 all 344 sites had been resolved, with 343 of the 344 satellite community Wi-Fi facilities having been installed, while one site in Morwell was abandoned.

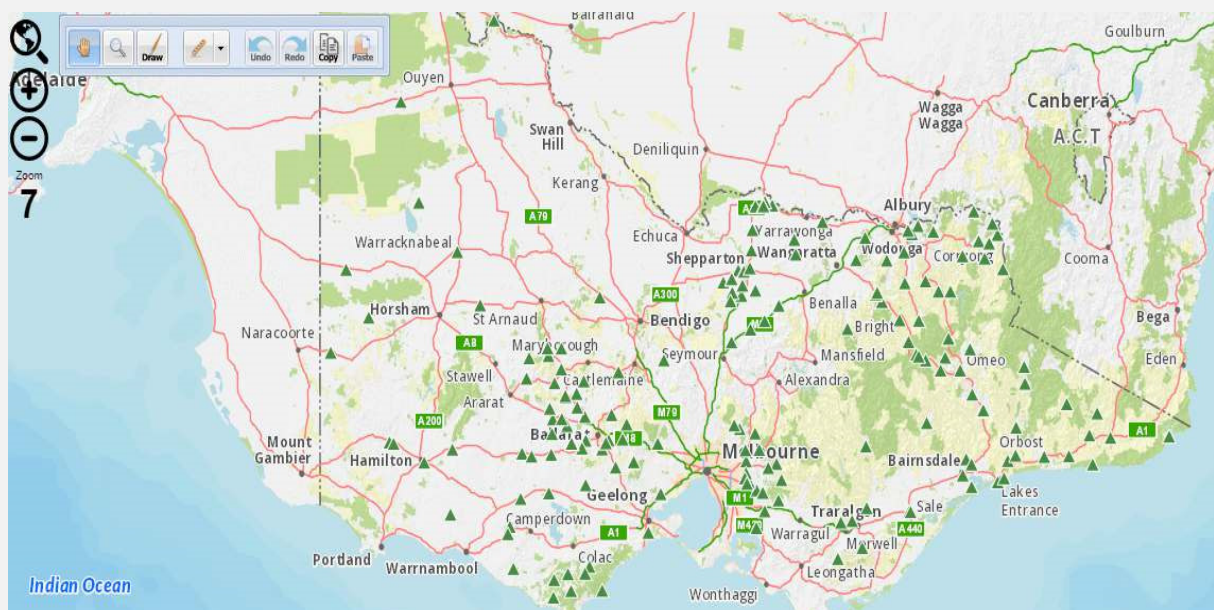
The active STAND Wi-Fi locations have been integrated into EM-COP. DJPR is also working with EMV, NBN, and the NBN software vendor to integrate real-time status reporting for the NBN satellite community Wi-Fi services into EM-COP.

CASE STUDY – DEPARTMENT OF JOBS, PRECINCTS AND REGIONS

During the April 2022 floods, Bemm River and Marlo experienced mobile and fixed telecommunications outages. STAND NBN satellite community Wi-Fi services were installed at their local CFAs and accessed by emergency services and other community groups.

Since the 2019–20 bushfires, DJPR deploys emergency management liaison officers (EMLO) when there are telecommunication impacts during an emergency. The local emergency services were aware of the STAND NBN satellite community Wi-Fi services and independently approached the telecommunication EMLO to ask for the services to be activated to their fullest capacity. DJPR was able to assist with this request and liaised with NBN to ensure the services were ready to be used.

In Bemm River, once a generator was turned on and the STAND service brought online, the local Incident Control Centre was relocated to the CFA. Incident controllers used services such as FaceTime to remain connected over the Wi-Fi services for 24 hours until power restored usual telecommunication and online services.



EM-COP Situation Portal with Active STAND Sites data label selected (Source: DJPR)

Mobile network hardening program – battery backup for mobile towers

In January 2020 the Australian Government announced the \$18m Mobile Network Hardening Program (MNHP) as part of STAND. The MNHP aims to increase the resilience of Australia's mobile telecommunication networks to help prevent, mitigate and manage outages during bushfires and other disasters, through grants to deploy upgrades to mobile telecommunications infrastructure.

MNHP Stage 1 provided funding to Optus, Telstra, and TPG to improve network resilience by upgrading battery backup power at base stations funded under the Australian Government's Mobile Black Spot Program, including 94 stations in Victoria. In August 2021 DJPR signed MoUs to support applications to MNHP Stage 2.

Under MNHP Stage 2 the Australian Government will provide \$10.9m for Optus, Telstra, and TPG to deliver 544 resilience upgrades at mobile base station sites across Australia, including 138 facilities in Victoria. The range of resilience improvements include permanent on-site generators, transportable generators, bushfire hardening, and batteries.

DJPR has worked with EMV to update the VicEmergency website with information for communities on telecommunications outages and how they can prepare themselves at these times. This includes written and video information available at emergency.vic.gov.au/prepare/#outages-and-disruptions/telecommunications-outages

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily.

FSIP1 17.6. To support dissemination and improved individual and community awareness of the impacts, disruptions and closures to the road network due to emergencies, DoT will seek funding to upgrade and modernise the VicTraffic App. This will enable integration with existing modern digital platforms to create centralised, up-to-date disruption information and journey planning; meet surge demand during emergencies; and support individuals and communities to make timely decisions about their safety, including those unfamiliar with road networks.

VicTraffic is the official VicRoads traffic information platform that lets users view real-time travel times on freeways around Melbourne, see traffic alerts for all of Victoria, and view upcoming roadworks and events likely to impact their travel.

As part of the 2021–22 Victorian State Budget, DoT was allocated \$22.6m over three years²⁸ to upgrade the VicTraffic App and website.

DoT has since commenced the project to upgrade the app and website and onboarded a project team.

A series of upgrades are planned in late 2022 and early 2023 to support functioning of the app and website over the 2022–23 summer season, including:

- ensuring VicTraffic is using the latest and most up to date data sources
- updating VicTraffic with additional information and a new user-friendly interface.

As of September 2022 this work was in the discovery and planning phase with user experience development (for the interface) and application programming interface development and testing (for the data sources) commencing.

DoT is also working to ensure traffic disruption data is consistent across VicTraffic and third party websites (including VicEmergency and Live Traffic NSW).

DoT advised that following budget approval, this action is now expected to be completed by June 2024, with website, app and backend system upgrades planned to be delivered as they are ready.

Finding

IGEM considers that this action is progressing satisfactorily, noting a revised due date was approved by the DoT Secretary.

²⁸ Funding was originally allocated for a four-year period, however as a result of DoT's subsequent consultation with the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, this has been changed to a three-year period.

5 Concluding remarks

The 2019–20 bushfires highlighted the vital role government agencies, businesses and communities collectively must play in all aspects of emergency management before, during and after such devastating events.

Overall, significant progress has been made by all government departments and agencies involved to bring about long-term impactful changes in response to the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 report. Notable achievements include the establishment of the Office of Bushfire Risk Management and the implementation of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System and the Australian Warning System across Victoria.

Other initiatives such as installing back-up telecommunication sites and planning for future emergencies through emergency evacuation exercises are necessary advances in future-proofing our communities for emergencies and building community resilience.

Many important initiatives remain in progress including the review of the emergency management operating model, the delivery of an updated state-level risk assessment report and the development of a whole-of-sector bushfire strategy and revised residual risk targets to guide bushfire fuel management activities.

IGEM will continue to monitor the implementation progress of all actions from the 10 Year Review and Phase 1 report that remain in progress to provide assurance that sustainable improvements to Victoria's emergency management arrangements are being made. In its next report, IGEM will also outline progress made on the implementation of commitments made in response to IGEM's Inquiry Phase 2 report, concerning improvements made to the state's relief and recovery arrangements.

IGEM thanks all lead government departments and agencies for advancing these initiatives and for their high-level cooperation and active contribution to monitoring and reporting activities, despite continuing operational pressures and demands.



Exercise Walkaway, a multi-agency exercise held in Wyndham on 28 August 2022
(Source: VCC Emergencies Ministry/Twitter)

Appendix A

Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector

Table 24: Status of recommendations and actions from the Review of 10 years of reform in Victoria's emergency management sector

REVIEW OF 10 YEARS OF REFORM IN VICTORIA'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SECTOR			
10YOR RECOMMENDATION 1			
<p>The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria, in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector:</p> <p>a) develops and implements a sector-wide outcomes framework that aligns to the strategic and operational elements of all phases of emergency management. The framework must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop emergency management outcomes that reflect the Victorian whole-of-government outcomes • identify outcome measures and associated indicators <p>b) provides guidance and support for the sector on how to incorporate emergency management outcomes and measures in emergency management planning, policy development, decision-making and assurance activities.</p>			
No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
10YOR 1.1	Over the past 12 months, outcomes frameworks have been developed by the CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV). BRV has also developed a recovery outcomes framework for the 2019-20 bushfires.	CFA, FRV & BRV	Complete
10YOR 1.2	In addition, Victoria's Resilient Recovery Strategy details the strategic approach to improving Victoria's recovery systems, setting agreed recovery outcomes to guide recovery programs, with consideration of local community outcomes and priorities.	EMV	Closed
10YOR 1.3	EMV will consult and collaborate with relevant agencies to develop a sector-wide outcomes framework to measure the effectiveness of the emergency management sector in supporting resilient communities and providing reliable, integrated and timely services. This framework will be finalised in the 2021-22 financial year.	EMV	Complete

10YOR RECOMMENDATION 2

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector:

- a) updates the 2012–13 State Emergency Risk Assessment to include strategic and operational elements of emergency management. This should consider:
 - the place-based risk assessment development through the community emergency risk assessment process
 - consequence management capability across the sector
 - existing risk models for natural and human-induced hazards.
- b) provides guidance and support for the sector on how to incorporate the updated risk assessment in emergency management planning, policy development, decision-making and assurance activities.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
10YOR 2.1	By October 2020, EMV will release an updated Emergency Risk in Victoria report. The report will identify the highest priority risks in Victoria at a state level, inform actions and activities to be undertaken to mitigate these risks, and manage the consequences where risks cannot be mitigated.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 2.2	EMV will deliver the first Victorian SEMP in September 2020, which will set out arrangements to manage the impacts of these risks before, during and after emergencies at a state level.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 2.3	Guidelines to facilitate the development of Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Plans (REMPs) will be published in September and December 2020 respectively.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 2.4	Using these Guidelines, EMV and sector partners will support regional emergency management planning committees to develop and endorse REMPs by December 2020 and municipal emergency management planning committees to update their existing MEMPs to align with reformed planning arrangements	EMV	Complete
10YOR 2.5	By December 2023, as part of the three-year rolling program of assurance, the Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) will be revised by local government and community representatives, using existing risk assessment processes that align with the national risk assessment guidelines and consider state and regional assessments.	EMV	In progress
10YOR 2.6	In 2021, EMV will lead the development of a contemporary and systemic approach to identifying and mitigating risk across Victoria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach will consider key drivers of change and make use of predictive forecasting tools to inform data analytics and intelligence. • It will establish partnerships with other jurisdictions and research organisations to establish and embed world-leading practice for risk assessment and the technological interdependence of systems and services. 	EMV	In progress

10YOR RECOMMENDATION 3

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector – develop and promote a preparedness strategy that:

- is relevant to all emergencies
- is aligned with existing, consistent and accessible preparedness message
- includes a clear, consistent and accessible preparedness message
- builds on the community preparedness work of the Australian Red Cross
- considers leading practice from other jurisdictions

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
10YOR 3.1	The VicEmergency App and website have been designed to promote shared responsibility for all emergencies, providing platforms to share information to empower individuals to make informed decisions and better support their communities. The 'Prepare and Get Ready' section of the VicEmergency App and website detail what preparedness arrangements communities can undertake to avoid situations becoming an emergency, and what they can expect in response to one. EMV will continue to enhance this section to inform action-based community preparedness.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 3.2	EMV will deliver the first Victorian SEMP in September 2020. The SEMP will clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors with a shared responsibility for emergency management, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individuals and households • community groups and networks • small, medium and large businesses, and the • emergency management sector. 	EMV	Complete
10YOR 3.3	EMV will work with the sector to review existing community resilience and preparedness strategies and initiatives and measure their effectiveness. The review will inform a future performance framework aligned with sector outcomes developed through the response to the Review's sector-wide outcomes	EMV	Complete
10YOR 3.4	As part of this review, EMV and sector partners will consider integrating and building on the community preparedness work of the Australian Red Cross and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (or revised national policy) and exploring best practice from other national and international jurisdictions.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 3.5	EMV will work with the sector in partnership with communities to review the Victorian Preparedness Goal by June 2022. The updated and refreshed Victorian Preparedness Goal will further promote the principles of shared responsibility and self-reliance and will be informed in part by the outcomes of the review's risk assessment recommendation. It will also build community awareness of the capability, capacity and resilience required in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.	EMV	Complete

10YOR RECOMMENDATION 4

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria streamlines the existing suite of work underway to identify gaps in the sector's capability and capacity to deliver a comprehensive sector-wide capability development strategy for operational and strategic personnel – including volunteers – that considers:

- a) all capabilities identified through the *Victorian Preparedness Framework* and additional strategic emergency management capabilities
- b) all capability development mechanisms (including accreditation, work-based learning, training and exercising).

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
10YOR 4.1	EMV will establish a full-time, permanent workforce for the SCC, significantly increasing the State's standing capacity to deliver public information, intelligence, logistical support, emergency management planning, and emergency risk and consequence analysis. This will be achieved through a funding commitment of \$17.06 million to support an additional 46 permanent staff based at the SCC.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 4.2	EMV will lead a strategic review of Victoria's network of Incident Control Centres and Regional Control Centres, focusing on capacity and resourcing to ensure a sustainable, effective model that is able to respond to large, concurrent and prolonged events. This includes a commitment by the Victorian Government of \$1.762 million to deliver a strategic review by May 2021.	EMV	In progress
10YOR 4.3	EMV will work with the sector to review the emergency management operating model and will provide a report to the Victorian Government by the end of 2021 that will identify options for a future emergency management operating model, including a recommended approach. The report will consider the use, scope and functionality of current assets, systems, processes and functions in line with the Victorian Preparedness Framework.	EMV	In progress
10YOR 4.4	EMV will review the current training and accreditation program for incident management personnel, to inform an action plan that enables the building and sustainment of the sectors capability requirements into the future.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 4.5	Identify resourcing, training and professional development needs to enhance leadership and operations managed by the three tiers of command and control within the state's emergency management arrangements. This will include training and development needed to support ongoing interoperability and resource integration across the sector.	EMV	Complete
10YOR 4.6	By June 2022, EMV will prepare a detailed implementation plan to enact the Victorian Government's preferred emergency management operating model	EMV	Yet to commence

10YOR 4.7	The future operating model will support and inform the development of a fit for purpose incident management platform identified in response to Recommendation 14 of the Inquiry Phase 1 report.	EMV	Yet to commence
10YOR 4.8	EMV will work with the sector to review and enhance the Victorian Preparedness Framework to ensure it is fit for purpose and identifies the needs of the sector. The review will consider learnings from the public health response to coronavirus (COVID-19) and recent bushfire seasons. This process will determine the service offering of the sector and potential measures to address identified gaps.	EMV	Complete

10YOR RECOMMENDATION 5

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the community and emergency management sector – develop comprehensive operational recovery guidelines that include:

- coordination arrangement for recovery activities across all tiers of emergency management
- pre-emergency and post-emergency recovery roles and responsibilities of the sector at the state, regional and municipal levels
- community recovery roles and responsibilities
- methods to provide logistical and financial support to impacted communities
- consideration of how to support community-led initiatives
- tools and approaches to share knowledge across councils and community service organisations
- how to consider and plan for long-term recovery needs.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
10YOR 5.1	BRV will continue to coordinate and report on the Victorian Government's implementation of the State-wide Bushfire Recovery Framework and Action Plan for communities impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires.	BRV	In progress
10YOR 5.2	The Victorian Government has also developed its Economic Recovery Practice and Social Recovery Frameworks to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. All departments will continue to prioritise the delivery of initiatives that stimulate economic and social recovery.	DJPR – Economic recovery DFFH –	Complete
10YOR 5.3	EMV, working with BRV, will develop operational recovery guidelines to pilot with key partners and local government through the 2020–21 fire season.	EMV	In progress
10YOR 5.4	EMV, working with BRV and key partners, will finalise and maintain operational recovery guidelines for all emergencies.	EMV	In progress

Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season – Phase 1

Table 25: Status of recommendations and actions from the Inquiry into the 2019–20 Victorian fire season – Phase 1

INQUIRY INTO THE 2019–20 VICTORIAN FIRE SEASON – PHASE 1			
FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 1			
<p>The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that responder agencies and Emergency Management Victoria review preparedness arrangements to ensure procedural documentation (including plans), recruitment, briefings and training are completed before significant seasonal events are likely to occur.</p> <p>Seasonal preparedness should culminate in attestations of assurance to confirm that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> documentation reflects relevant risks and potential impacts briefings and training schedules have been tailored and delivered according to seasonal influences recruitment strategies enable the engagement of adequate numbers of appropriately skilled personnel for the entire season. 			
No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 1.1	EMV is working with the sector to adapt its preparedness planning arrangements, including training and accreditation, to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 1.2	The emergency management sector is on track to deliver earlier pre-season preparedness briefings, including its State seasonal outlook, to inform briefings and training sessions across regional and municipal levels.	EMV	Closed
FSIP1 1.3	Ahead of this fire season, the Victorian Government will invest in sector capacity and capability through recruitment, training and accreditation of key roles. FFMVic has already started recruiting project firefighting personnel in response to the seasonal outlook, to ensure adequate time for capability development training.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 1.4	Before the 2020–21 bushfire season, EMV will release an updated Emergency Risk in Victoria report, confirming the highest priority risks in Victoria.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 1.5	EMV will release the first Victorian SEMP in September 2020, which will articulate Victoria’s preparedness arrangements, including the command and control structures and plans and procedures necessary to efficiently and effectively undertake emergency responses.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 1.6	In the lead-up to the 2020–21 fire season, EMV will work with responder agencies to review arrangements to ensure all required plans and procedures, recruitment, briefings and training are in place and completed. This will culminate in an attestation by the EMC to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on heightened preparedness arrangements informed by seasonal risk factors on behalf of responder agencies, to be delivered by 1 November 2020 and in subsequent years.	EMV	Complete

FSIP1 1.7	EMV and the sector will commence a review of Victoria's State Bushfire Plan ahead of the 2021–22 fire season. The State Bushfire Plan is a sub-plan of the State Emergency Response Plan (SERP) and the principal document that guides the state's bushfire emergency arrangements. The Plan will be reviewed against the forthcoming SEMP, which will replace the SERP in September 2020.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 1.8	The attestation process will be broadened to address a wider range of emergency risks, including non-seasonal risks. This will reinforce the requirements for the sector to be prepared to respond to any emergency event on any day of the year.	EMV	Complete

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 2

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the State review (and where necessary amend) legislation including but not limited to the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*, *Forest Act 1958* and *Local Government Act 2020* to:

- a) clarify accountability for fuel management across land and fire agencies, public authorities, councils, private organisations and individuals
- b) define shared responsibility for fuel management across land and fire agencies, stakeholders and community
- c) enable organisations with a legislated responsibility for fuel management to conduct fuel management on behalf of other organisations on land outside of their legislated land tenure, where invited to do so
- d) provide consistent protections to all personnel, including volunteers, when carrying out fuel management functions on behalf of their legislated organisation.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 2.1	DELWP will continue to work with Traditional Owners to implement the Cultural Fire Strategy.	DELWP	In progress
FSIP1 2.2	<p>DELWP and DJCS will lead a review of the legislative framework and consider legislative change to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable more effective planning and delivery of bushfire management across different land tenures and responsible agencies • support greater interoperability • ensure all firefighters (including volunteers) have sufficient legal protections when carrying out fuel management, and • consider any relevant legislative recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. <p>Legislative changes will be introduced in 2022.</p> <p>The review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure accountabilities for fuel management are clear, and consistent with the principle of shared responsibility, • maintain individual rights and responsibilities while also enabling land and fire agencies, public authorities, councils, private organisations and individuals to work together to manage fuel on public and private land 	DELWP & DJCS	In progress

- enable land and fire management departments and agencies, including DELWP, the CFA, local government, DoT and other land managers, to conduct fuel management on any land where mutual agreement exists
- identify any measures required to better enable Traditional Owners to carry out cultural fire
- ensure consistent protections and immunities for all personnel, including volunteers, when carrying out fuel management activities on behalf of their legislated organisations
- consider the role of an expanded Code of Practice for Bushfire Management
- examine the need for change to regulatory tools such as fire permits, and
- enable to end-to-end bushfire risk management framework for all public and private land in Victoria, such as powers to create plans or standards for how land and fire agencies manage bushfire risk.

FSIP1 2.3	DELWP will work with road and rail managers, local government and other stakeholders to ensure clarity on regulatory controls and deliver efficient approvals processes relevant to activities to reduce bushfire risk, such as permitted native vegetation removal and permits to burn off while ensuring environmental protections are maintained.	DELWP	In progress (overdue)
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FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 3

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the State support the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) and its partners to expand the Safer Together program to:

- increase program uptake and adoption by legislated fuel management organisations including local government, the Department of Transport and VicTrack
- implement a consistent risk-based approach to fuel management program planning from strategic through to operational and tactical levels supported by appropriate risk assessment tools, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting mechanisms
- develop common spatial datasets for use by all road managers, standardising road and roadside fuel maintenance levels based on bushfire risk and sharing resources to maintain continuous roadsides managed by multiple parties.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 3.1	DELWP will deliver an expanded Safer Together program, including increased involvement for EMV, the CFA, DoT and its agencies, and local government by December 2020.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 3.2	DELWP and CFA will release updated regional Bushfire Management Strategies to guide fuel management activities across public and private land by December 2020.	DELWP & CFA	Complete

FSIP1 3.3	DELWP, in collaboration with EMV and other land and fire managers, will lead the development of a whole of sector strategy to guide land and fire management in the context of a changing climate, growing population and changing demographics by November 2021. In addition to public land, the whole of sector strategy will consider how to effectively support road managers and local governments to mitigate bushfire risks on roadsides and in high bushfire risk local government areas.	DELWP	In progress
FSIP1 3.4	DELWP will review risk-based strategic and operational planning frameworks and processes to better incorporate roadsides and private land by December 2022.	DELWP	In progress
FSIP1 3.5	DELWP will review the fuel management Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework and the annual Fuel Management Report to identify changes required to more fully incorporate private land and roadsides. The review will be complete by July 2021.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 3.6	DELWP, in partnership with DoT, local government and other road and rail managers, will review existing roadside spatial datasets to identify gaps and opportunities to improve the consistency and usability of these datasets to manage bushfire risk on roadsides and rail corridors.	DELWP	In progress

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 4

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that in conjunction with Inquiry Recommendation 2, the State establish or assign responsibility to a single body or entity to lead and coordinate the implementation of evidence-based fuel management policy, practice and assurance and reporting on activities on both public and private land in Victoria.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 4.1	DELWP will establish an Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) to lead and coordinate the implementation of evidence-based fuel management policy, practice and assurance and reporting on activities on both public and private land in Victoria.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 4.2	DELWP will establish an Advisory Panel to advise the Secretary to DELWP on agreed priority focus areas that assist the OBRM to effectively acquit its accountability to lead and coordinate the implementation of bushfire risk management (including advice on target setting), planning, delivery, assurance mechanisms and frameworks, and reporting across all public and private land in Victoria. The panel will comprise an independent chair, senior executives representing key land and fire management agencies (FFMVic, CFA, FRV, DoT and DJPR) and members with technical expertise in bushfire risk modelling and management, fire ecology, community behaviour change, land use planning and other specialist capabilities required to ensure the panel is equipped to provide high-quality, evidence-based advice.	DELWP	Complete

The Emergency Management Commissioner will be a standing member of the advisory panel, representing Emergency Management Victoria and ensuring linkages to Victoria's integrated emergency management arrangements and associated preparedness and assurance activities.

The independent chair and skills based members will be appointed by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

FSIP1 4.3	DELWP will deliver an expanded Safer Together program, including increased involvement for EMV, the CFA, DoT and its agencies, and local government by December 2020, as outlined in response to Recommendation 3.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP 4.4	DELWP and CFA will release updated regional Bushfire Management Strategies to guide fuel management activities across public and private land by December 2020, as outlined in response to Recommendation 3.	DELWP & CFA	Complete

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 5

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – with support from all legislated fuel management organisations for public and private land – lead a community engagement process to improve the Victorian community's understanding of:

- the purpose of Victoria's fuel management program and the concept of residual risk
- the conditions under which fuel management effectiveness is limited
- how fuel management is planned, conducted, evaluated and reported.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 5.1	DELWP and CFA will release updated regional Bushfire Management Strategies by December 2020, with information to help communities understand bushfire risk at a landscape level.	DELWP & CFA	Complete
FSIP1 5.2	By June 2021, DELWP will update and simplify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> information provided about Victoria's fuel management program, the concept of residual risk and how fuel management effectiveness is evaluated, and what bushfire risk means at state, regional and community levels. 	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 5.3	As part of the review of the risk target committed at Recommendation 9, DELWP, in collaboration with EMV and land and fire agencies, will develop a community engagement process that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> builds understanding of the fuel management program and its limitations, makes targets more meaningful and understandable to the community, and supports transparency and shared responsibility. 	DELWP	Complete

FSIP1 5.4	By December 2021, DELWP will develop shared guidance and principles for engaging with communities and with other agencies involved in bushfire risk management. The shared guidance and principles will clarify accountabilities and ensure a community-centred and consistent approach.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 5.5	The whole of sector strategy for bushfire management will draw on behavioural change work being carried out under Safer Together to support people to take action to address bushfire risk in their local area and on their own land.	DELWP	In progress

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 6

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – supported by other organisations with a legislated responsibility for fuel management – plan for and increase the application of non-burning fuel management treatments including mechanical means.

The annual fuel management report should include the non-burn component of fuel management treatment, track annual change, and provide a comparison to the previous three years.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 6.1	DELWP is enhancing Victoria's network of strategic fuel breaks and is planning for how this can be expanded further in reparation for the 2020–21 fire season. The creation and maintenance of strategic fuel breaks is a key mechanical treatment as Victoria adapts to the reduced window available for planned burning due to climate change.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 6.2	DELWP will include additional data regarding the non-burn component of fuel management treatment on public land, track annual change, and provide a comparison to the previous three years as detailed in DELWP's 2019-20 fuel management report	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 6.3	DELWP will work in partnership with DoT, other road and rail managers, CFA and local government to identify key arterial roads that provide strategic advantage for firefighting, and work together to conduct priority fuel treatment works ahead of the 2020–21 fire season.	DELWP	Closed
FSIP1 6.4	The Victorian Government will increase its investment in non-burning fuel management treatment, including mechanical treatment, through DELWP, CFA, DoT and local government.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 6.5	DELWP will expand the permanent network of strategic fuel breaks across Victoria by December 2022.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 6.6	DELWP will continue to deliver an expanded 365-day per year fuel management program to respond to earlier and longer bushfire seasons and enhance Victoria's first attack capacity including personnel, plant and equipment.	DELWP	In progress

FSIP1 6.7	DELWP will develop a strategy for the transition and retention of forestry contractors by June 2021, to ensure ready availability of specialist skills and machinery for the creation of fuel breaks, removal of hazardous trees and reopening of roads remain available to support bushfire and emergency management operations.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 6.8	The Victorian Government will increase its investment in the construction and maintenance of public land roads and bridges (for example, upgrading timber structures to fire-resistant materials), management of hazardous trees, vehicles and equipment to ensure that firefighters can safely access the forest for fire prevention, preparedness, fuel management (including planned burning and mechanical treatment), suppression and recovery operations, under conditions of increased fire frequency and intensity. These activities are targeted at improving access to public native forests.	DELWP	In progress
FSIP1 6.9	To complement new fuel breaks on public land, DELWP will work with DoT to identify and conduct fuel management along major arterial roads where road positioning provides strategic advantage for bushfire suppression and adds a valuable contribution to the strategic fuel break network.	DELWP & DoT	In progress
FSIP1 6.10	DoT will also investigate vegetation management measures for the benefit of both biodiversity conservation and fuel reduction, such as the removal of invasive shrubs and the restoration of low biomass native grasslands.	DoT	Complete

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 7

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) lead the development and distribution of evidence-based land and fuel management tools for use by all legislated fuel management organisations to ensure a common approach to fuel management.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 7.1	DELWP and CFA are currently improving how weather conditions are reflected in bushfire risk modelling, improving data on house loss and asset location, and improving understanding of the likelihood of ignition events. This work will improve understanding of bushfire risk in a broader range of circumstances, providing an evidence base for the development of more sophisticated fuel management tools.	DELWP & CFA	Complete
FSIP1 7.2	DELWP has recently developed methods to measure the specific contribution of fuel management to risk reduction, improving Victoria's ability to measure the effectiveness of fuel management in reducing bushfire risk.	DELWP	Complete

FSIP1 7.3	As part of the Risk 2.0 project, DELWP will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve methods for modelling bushfire risk over a range of weather scenarios, by June 2021, develop an enhanced state-wide fuel and treatability layer by June 2021, and be able to measure the effect of mechanical fuel treatments on fire behaviour by December 2020. 	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 7.4	DELWP will prepare a bushfire science, fire ecology and knowledge and predictive services strategic plan, to identify priority investment areas by April 2021.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 7.5	DELWP will ensure that all land and fire management agencies and local government have ongoing access to current bushfire risk information and will investigate the appropriate mechanism/s to deliver this by June 2021.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 7.6	The Victorian Government will provide additional funding to support Traditional Owners to lead implementation of the Cultural Fire Strategy.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 7.7	DELWP will work in partnership with the CFA to develop and coordinate the state-wide application of tools to support risk-based bushfire management across public and private land.	DELWP	Complete

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 8

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – in conjunction with legislated fuel management organisations – develop a common set of objectives, metrics and reporting requirements for fuel management that form part of a compulsory regime that enables the Victorian Government to report publicly on a holistic fuel management program.

The reporting requirements should:

- apply to all organisations with a legislated role in fuel management; across public and private land (all land tenures); and at all levels – state, regional and municipal
- include residual risk where appropriate – however, complementary metrics should be developed if residual risk cannot be determined.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 8.1	DELWP will release its 2019-20 fuel management report by December 2020.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 8.2	DELWP will engage with legislated fuel managers to identify additional existing data that can be incorporated into the 2020–21 fuel management report.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 8.3	DELWP will expand the fuel management Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework and the annual Fuel Management Report, to incorporate private land, roadsides and public land managed by other agencies. This will commence with available activity data included in the 2021–22 report, building to a suite of relevant measures to provide transparency on activities and effectiveness in reducing bushfire risk.	DELWP	In progress

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 9

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (or the single entity referenced in Recommendation 4) – in collaboration with the Country Fire Authority and local government – undertake a review of the current residual risk target to ensure that it remains contemporary in terms of its designated percentage value. The review should:

- a) involve engagement with land and fire management agencies; public authorities; private organisations; individuals and any other stakeholders with a role in fuel management
- b) define a pathway to expanding the residual risk target to apply to all methods of fuel management, with the expansion of the target to apply across all organisations with a legislated responsibility for fuel management
- c) become part of a program of review of the State's land and fuel management policy occurring on a regular basis and not exceeding a five-year cycle.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 9.1	DELWP and CFA are undertaking work to improve bushfire risk data and modelling. This work will provide the basis of building the technical capability for agencies to work with stakeholders and the community to review the current residual risk target.	DELWP & CFA	Complete
FSIP1 9.2	DELWP and CFA are currently updating approaches to modelling risk, centred on a metric of house loss. This work will broaden the range of values considered in bushfire risk modelling, to include water yield and quality, critical infrastructure, fire size and agricultural values.	DELWP & CFA	Complete
FSIP1 9.3	DELWP is currently undertaking work to improve modelling of the impact of fuel management on environmental values, including threatened species. These modelling improvements will drive improvements in evaluation and reporting, and strategic bushfire management planning.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 9.4	DELWP will deliver a new spatial dataset (to underpin bushfire risk modelling) that provides enhanced understanding of asset location by June 2021.	DELWP	Complete
FSIP1 9.5	DELWP will commission a comprehensive review of fuel management targets and provide advice to Victorian Government. New targets will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and the community and be communicated as part of the sector's new strategy for land and fire management, by December 2021. This will link to engagement on bushfire fuel management agreed in response to Recommendation 5.	DELWP	In progress

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 10

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in accepting that emergency management is a 'shared responsibility' - collaborate with the emergency management sector and community to:

- a) establish clear guidance that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of individuals, communities, the private sector, responder agencies and government before, during and after emergencies
- b) develop, implement and evaluate an ongoing communications strategy that ensures these roles and responsibilities are well-understood and reiterated throughout the year.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 10.1	EMV released the SEMP in September 2020. The SEMP sets out the roles and responsibilities of individuals and households, as well as clarifies roles and assign responsibilities to the emergency management sector agencies, business, community groups and networks. The SEMP forms part of Victoria's new emergency management planning arrangements, including new arrangements at regional and local levels. Together, these planning reforms provide critical guidance for communities, ensuring they understand what they can expect in terms of support - and what is expected of them - in the event of an emergency.	EMV	Closed
FSIP1 10.2	As part of the development of a state-wide community led preparedness strategy in response to the community preparedness recommendation of the 10-year Review report EMV will work with the sector to ensure that the shared responsibility model in the SEMP is further progressed through the regional and municipal emergency management planning processes.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 10.3	EMV and its sector partners will use the Victorian Preparedness Framework to plan and test different high-impact, plausible scenarios across the sector and with communities, to embed what shared responsibility means.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 10.4	EMV and responder agencies will forge stronger partnerships with the private sector in emergency planning and response as part of the shared responsibility model, building on the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Plans and Sector Resilience Networks.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 10.5	The Victorian Government will continue to invest in different communication strategies to build a common understanding of risk and what individuals, households and communities can do to act and mitigate risk (for example, seasonal campaigns, engagement through the Safer Together Program and other year-round opportunities).	EMV	In progress

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 11

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Victoria Police – in collaboration with the community and the emergency management sector – reflect on events of the 2019-20 fire season to review and enhance evacuation plans and processes with consideration of:

- a) high risk areas (including remote locations)
- b) early evacuation triggers
- c) the potential for isolated communities
- d) the presence of tourists and non-residents
- e) individual decisions to not evacuate
- f) the inability to evacuate
- g) consequence management and compounding events such as the loss of essential services or health impacts.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 11.1	The Victorian Government is reviewing State of Disaster legislation to ensure that existing powers in relation to evacuation are adequate for different emergency scenarios.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 11.2	Evacuation plans for flood risk communities are being refined to reflect a possible wet spring and COVID-19 requirements.	VicPol	Closed
FSIP1 11.3	The Victorian Government has committed to reviewing Victoria's Code Red arrangements to ensure there is absolute clarity in relation to evacuation requirements and expectations. This work is expected to be finalised by November 2020.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 11.4	Prior to the 2021–22 financial year, the Victorian Government will make sure consistent processes and communications are developed in relation to evacuations and the closure of access roads, parks and reserves.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 11.5	Victoria Police, in collaboration with relevant agencies, will update the Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) for evacuations and other relevant doctrine to incorporate learnings from evacuations during the 2019-20 summer. This work will be completed in two phases (with priority actions completed before the upcoming season, followed by consideration of longer-term actions).	VicPol	Complete
FSIP1 11.6	Victoria Police, in conjunction with responder agencies will update and enhance risk intelligence and predictive service offerings to support evacuation decision-making as it applies to evacuation planning and support the development of modelling to enhance the future development of risk-based evacuation and localised emergency management plans.	VicPol	Closed
FSIP1 11.7	Victoria Police in conjunction with sector partners, commit to applying learnings from Exercise Praesidio - a simulated bushfire evacuation in 2019 involving the Powelltown, Three Bridges and Gilderoy communities – to improve future evacuation plans, processes and capability.	VicPol	Complete

FSIP1 11.8	Victoria Police will work with regions, partner agencies and the community to review, enhance and further develop evacuation plans for high-risk communities including those in remote locations. A key focus will be visitors and tourists planning to travel within these locations.	VicPol	Complete
FSIP1 11.9	To further strengthen evacuation plans and processes, Victoria Police commits to work with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), land managers, fire agencies and the community to better understand and identify risks on a year-to-year basis, taking into account factors such as climate change, seasonal conditions, and previous bushfire history.	VicPol	Complete
FSIP1 11.10	Victoria Police, in conjunction with sector partners, will develop and deliver training and exercising to key incident management and decision-making personnel on improved evacuation doctrine and processes.	VicPol	Complete
FSIP1 11.11	Victoria Police will look at creating a cadre of specially trained personnel equipped to undertake evacuation and traffic management roles required in an emergency, to ensure evacuation and early departure from at-risk areas occurs seamlessly.	VicPol	Complete
FSIP1 11.12	The Victorian Government commits to improving evacuation decision-making processes– for example, through expanded use of more sophisticated tools such as spatially based evacuation planning currently being trialled along the Great Ocean Road.	EMV	Complete

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 12

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the emergency management sector and as part of the emergency management planning reforms:

- a) review, update and confirm arrangements for all tiers of control, including the flexible application of areas of operations, with a particular focus on the triggers for activation, integration with other tiers of control and clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- b) exercise these arrangements to ensure they are appropriate and familiar during emergencies.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 12.1	The SEMP incorporates command and control arrangement flexibility to enable a more agile response to concurrent and compounding emergencies.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 12.2	EMV and agencies will confirm control arrangements in readiness for 2020–21 summer season, including the intended use and application of any area of operation, and subsequently exercise the state and regional control teams to ensure arrangements and processes are understood.	EMV	Complete

FSIP1 12.3	EMV and its partners will train personnel on any consequential changes to the tiers of control through the introduction of the SEMP and undertaking scenario exercises to test the respective state, regional and municipal emergency management plans.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 12.4	State, regional and incident tier arrangements will be reinforced through the delivery of the Regional and Municipal Emergency Management plans to better support emergency response activities.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 12.5	The revised State Bushfire Plan will inform any changes to arrangements to the existing tiers of command and control for bushfire, while improving the doctrine that supports the operation of each tier by clearly defining roles and responsibilities, supported by consistent implementation of agreed Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System structures.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 12.6	The Victorian Government commits to developing community-focused communication and engagement strategies to build greater understanding of operational structures and arrangements across all phases of emergencies.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 12.7	EMV will conduct a review of the introduction of the first SEMP following the 2020–21 fire season, to inform any necessary changes, prior to the 2021–22 fire season.	EMV	Complete

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 13

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in partnership with agencies engaged in state, regional and incident control centres:

- a) review and update shift roster and handover processes to ensure they are procedurally consistent and support the achievement of objectives at all stages of a protracted event
- b) provide training and guidance to ensure shift roster and handover processes are consistently applied in state, regional and incident control centres.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 13.1	EMV will commence work with the sector to update shift roster and handover processes including the use and application of existing incident action planning guidance and tools, as well as creation of new tools such as standardised handover templates.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 13.2	EMV will update the pre-season training content so that handover practices and processes are properly understood in state, regional and incident control centres, as well as reinforcing consistent application of incident action planning, especially during protracted and complex events.	EMV	In progress

FSIP1 13.3	The Real Time Monitoring and Evaluation (RTM&E) program will include examination of handover processes and incident action planning as part of the state's Assurance and Learning Unit 2020–21 season activity. The RTM&E function monitors operational performance, systems and processes, and evaluations.	EMV	Closed
FSIP1 13.4	EMV will consider compliance auditing across a range of critical incident management practices, such as measuring progress towards achieving incident objectives and completing handovers, as part of the development of a sector-wide outcomes framework in response to the sector-wide outcomes recommendation in the Review report.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 13.5	As part of the investment in training for the sector identified in the sector capability and capacity recommendation in the review report, the Victorian Government will ensure that Incident Management Team personnel are provided with the training, exercising and simulation experiences required to effectively perform their roles and apply these processes in an environment with increasing complexities and overlapping emergencies.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 13.6	IGEM recognised the significant achievements of Victoria's response to the 2019–20 bushfires, despite the challenges presented by the scale, extent and duration of the season. Resources were drawn from multiple agencies over an extended period, including from other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally. The complex and prolonged nature of this event and the varying industrial arrangements around shift rotations across a multitude of agencies, made information exchange and handover processes within regional and incident management centres critical.	EMV	Closed
FSIP1 13.7	The Victorian Government is committed to improving handover processes, particularly across different shifts and personnel changes, to facilitate more effective and consistent handover and incident management practices.	EMV	Closed

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 14

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in consultation with relevant agencies – develop a system to manage personnel and asset deployments to all tiers of incident management to meet the needs of the emergency and support the health and wellbeing of personnel. Where appropriate and within occupational health and safety requirements, this may include:

- a) standardised shift rosters across agencies and incident management tiers
- b) a single or integrated platform to allow consistent recording of shift times and locations
- c) records of accreditation, qualification, training and currency.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 14.1	EMV will work with the sector to examine the application and constraints of resource management, with a view to developing a standing state strategic resource plan. This review will include safety management systems and processes.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 14.2	EMV will as a priority, develop common incident resourcing principles to maximise deployment and resourcing, along with a fit for purpose safety management system that can integrate information from across agencies.	EMV	Closed
FSIP1 14.3	EMV will work with the sector to update and re-issue the multi-agency Fatigue Management Safety Fact Sheet and include fatigue management content within pre-season briefings.	EMV	Closed
FSIP1 14.4	As part of the development of a contemporary emergency management operating model identified in the response to the sector capability and capacity recommendation of the Review report, EMV will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop sector guidelines that optimise deployment; service delivery; employee health; and wellbeing. These guidelines will seek to enhance consistency where appropriate, while supporting an agile and diverse workforce. 	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 14.5	EMV will work with the sector to develop and implement a robust system for Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) incident management.	EMV	In progress (overdue)
FSIP1 14.6	EMV will initiate research into interstate and international rostering and resourcing management arrangements, to identify potential improvements or alternative models to the current Victorian arrangements.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 14.7	EMV will, in consultation with all agencies, develop consolidated fatigue management guidance to inform multi-agency incident operations.	EMV	Closed

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 15

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria collaborate with the emergency management sector to develop a capacity model that considers current and future:

- a) career and volunteer emergency management personnel requirements
- b) identified and trained personnel for surge requirements
- c) emergency risks and climate scenarios.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 15.1	EMV has appointed critical roles following the response to the 2019-20 fire season. The creation of the Cross-Border and Preparedness Operations Manager and a Strategic Communications Manager are part of the first steps in addressing gaps identified.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 15.2	EMV and sector partners have been and will continue to utilise the Victorian Preparedness Framework to assess the capability and inform capacity requirements required to plan for, withstand and recover from emergencies.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 15.3	Local Government Victoria will continue its work with local government authorities to implement its Councils and Emergencies Project. This multi-year project utilises the Victorian Preparedness Framework to model capability and capacity of local government in emergency management.	DJPR	Complete
FSIP1 15.4	The sector, supported by EMV's leadership, commits to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting emergency management training and accreditation programs in the lead-up to the 2020–21 fire season to maintain delivery during COVID-19 response restrictions, including eLearning and eBriefing processes. This approach will be reviewed with a view to informing the longer-term approach detailed below. 	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 15.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencing a review of the current training and accreditation program for incident management personnel and critical emergency management roles, that informs an action plan supporting the building and sustainment of the sector's capability requirements into the future. 	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 15.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting the necessary resources to manage seasonal risks in the lead-up to the 2020–21 season and including this within the EMC's annual attestation. 	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 15.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with agencies to develop and document the services and supports they bring to the management of emergencies. This will provide clarity in respect to community expectations and responsibilities. 	EMV	Complete

FSIP1 15.8	As part of the development of a contemporary emergency management operating model identified in the response to the Review, EMV will work with the sector to review workforce needs, to inform the design of a capability model that incorporates strategic recruitment, accreditation and retention, in paid and volunteer workforces. This model will focus on new opportunities to educate the sector, providing leadership development pathways for all personnel. This review will also identify investment required in infrastructure, systems, governance and processes.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 15.9	EMV will work with responder agencies to ensure that the assets, tools and equipment required to effectively and safely respond to bushfire emergencies in a changing climate and physical environment are identified and incorporated in future business cases.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 15.10	EMV will work with climate scientists to undertake a review of emergency risks under climate scenarios across a range of hazard types to inform future capacity requirements.	EMV	In progress

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 16

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria works with the emergency management sector and relevant emergency management entities in New South Wales and South Australia to identify and address key cross border operational and resource management issues. This engagement should aim to enhance interoperability and maximise the capability and capacity of agencies to work together during emergencies along Victoria's borders.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 16.1	EMV has appointed a dedicated Cross-Border and Preparedness Operations Manager since the end of the 2019-20 fire season, whose immediate priorities are to assess existing cross-border mutual aid agreements for emergency management.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 16.2	EMV will lead a sector review to ensure cohesive and consistent warnings and advice messages are broadcast along borders.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 16.3	EMV will work closely with relevant stakeholders in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania to implement improvements in emergency preparedness and response, including formalising procedures for deployment of liaison officers across borders.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 16.4	Prior to the 2020–21 fire season, EMV will work with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and the Victorian Cross-Border Commissioner to clarify emergency management roles and responsibilities of the Victorian Cross-Border Commissioner. Building on this, the EMC will partner with the Cross-Border Commissioner to strengthen interstate relationships in relation to emergency management arrangements.	EMV	Complete

FSIP1 16.5	The EMC will continue to strengthen the interests of Victoria through representation on the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee in relation to the Arrangement for Interstate Assistance.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 16.6	EMV and the sector will identify cross-border risks and opportunities through the Regional and Municipal Emergency Management Planning processes.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 16.7	EMV commits to undertaking scenario exercises with cross-border emergency management partners to foster interoperability and stronger relationships between states.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 16.8	Victoria will work with other states to ensure interoperability of systems and standardised tools as far as possible, to support cross border assistance.	EMV	In progress

FSIP1 RECOMMENDATION 17

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in collaboration with the emergency management sector – develop and implements processes to ensure greater dissemination and improved understanding of information for all Victorians, and visitors to Victoria in an emergency event. This should consider but not be exclusive to individuals who:

- a) are not familiar with Victoria and its environment
- b) find it difficult to understand and respond to emergency information
- c) are socially or geographically isolated.

No.	Action	Lead agency	Action status
FSIP1 17.1	EMV will enhance the VicEmergency app and website to better accommodate needs of CALD communities ahead of the 2020–21 fire season.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 17.2	Before the 2021–22 financial year, EMV - in collaboration with agencies - will review and update the Victorian Warning Protocol, Joint Standard Operating Procedure 4.01– Public Information and Warnings, and other guidelines and documentation, to incorporate the findings of the IGEM Inquiry.	EMV	Complete
FSIP1 17.3	Victoria will continue to take the lead in working with other states and territories to agree to, and seek national funding for, enhancements to the Emergency Alert platform. These enhancements will allow translation into languages other than English to better reach CALD communities.	EMV	In progress
FSIP1 17.4	The Victorian Government will investigate options for disseminating critical information across a range of emergencies in multiple languages, building on lessons learned from both the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic. Enhancements will improve translation capabilities (such as better pre-formed messaging and using more symbols where appropriate) and accessibility, including text-to-voice opportunities.	EMV	In progress

FSIP1 17.5	Victoria will look to partner with the Commonwealth and target it's \$37.1 million package to strengthen telecommunications resilience in socially and geographically isolated communities in bushfire and disaster-prone areas. This could include investment in upgrading alternative power sources and improving NBN satellite services in rural and country fires services and designated evacuation areas.	DJPR	In progress
FSIP1 17.6	To support dissemination and improved individual and community awareness of the impacts, disruptions and closures to the road network due to emergencies, DoT will seek funding to upgrade and modernise the VicTraffic App. This will enable integration with existing modern digital platforms to create centralised, up-to-date disruption information and journey planning; meet surge demand during emergencies; and support individuals and communities to make timely decisions about their safety, including those unfamiliar with road networks.	DoT	In progress





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