



Otway District
Relief and Recovery
Collaboration

Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan

Version 1.2 April 2017

Otway District Relief & Recovery Collaboration



Colac Otway
SHIRE



Surf COAST
SHIRE



CORANGAMITE
SHIRE

Document control

| | |
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| April 2016 | Version 1.1 – Review of plan post December 2015 activation. Changes to organisation names, terminology consistent with EMMV and industry standard. |
| April 2017 | Version 1.2 – Changes to organisation names, terminology consistent with EMMV and industry standard. |

Document distribution

| Name | Organisation / Role |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Surf Coast Shire | Municipal Emergency Resource Officer |
| | Municipal Emergency Manager |
| | Municipal Recovery Manager |
| | MEMP Committee |
| Colac Otway Shire | Municipal Emergency Resource Officer |
| | Municipal Emergency Manager |
| | Municipal Recovery Manager |
| | MEMP Committee |
| Corangamite Shire | Municipal Emergency Resource Officer |
| | Municipal Emergency Manager |
| | Municipal Recovery Manager |
| | MEMP Committee |

ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AV | Ambulance Victoria |
| ARC | Australian Red Cross |
| BOM | Bureau of Meteorology |
| BSWR | Barwon South West Region |
| CERA | Community Emergency Risk Assessment |
| CFA | Country Fire Authority |
| CRC | Community Recovery Committee |
| DELWP | Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning |
| DHHS | Department of Health and Human Services |
| EHO | Environmental Health Officer |
| EMA | Emergency Management Australia |
| EMMV | Emergency Management Manual Victoria |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Authority |
| ERC | Emergency Relief Centre |
| ESLO | Emergency Services Liaison Officer |
| ICC | Incident Control centre |
| MECC | Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre |
| MEMEG | Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group |
| MEMP | Municipal Emergency Management Plan |
| MEMPC | Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee |
| MERC | Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (Victoria Police) |
| MERO | Municipal Emergency Resource Officer |
| MRM | Municipal Recovery Manager |
| MRSC | Municipal Recovery Sub-Committee |
| NDRA | National Disaster Relief Arrangements |
| OIC | Officer in Charge |
| RDNS | Royal District Nursing Services |
| RERC | Regional Emergency Response Coordinator |
| RFR | Register Find Reunite (Red Cross) |
| RSPCA | Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals |
| SITREP | Situation Report |
| SOG | Standard Operating Guideline |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| VCC EM | VCC Emergencies Ministry |
| VICPOL | Victoria Police |
| VICSES | Victoria State Emergency Service |
| WICEN | Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network |

Otway District Councils



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1 Introduction

The Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration (*the Collaboration*) Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan has been produced pursuant to Section 20(2), Municipal Emergency Management Plan, of the *Emergency Management Act 1986*.

The Chair of the Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee, in consultation with the Municipal Recovery Managers, will oversee the maintenance and review of this Plan in conjunction with Recovery Committees, the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees, and where required, Emergency Recovery Sub-Committees.

Recovery management will be based on a partnership model with other agencies. The model of recovery management will vary depending on the circumstances of the emergency event.

Recovery management will be focused on the needs of the local community and supporting the residents to re-establish their lives from a social, economic and emotional perspective.

1.1 Definition

Emergency recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency affected communities in the restoration of their emotional, economic and physical well-being plus the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and the rehabilitation of the natural environment.

The *Emergency Management Act 1986* states that recovery is “the assisting of persons and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning” (Sec 4A).

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of providing recovery services is to assist the affected community towards management of its own recovery.

It is recognised that when a community experiences a significant event, there is a loss of social fabric and therefore a need to supplement the personal, family and community structures that have been disrupted by the event.

The Relief and Recovery Plan will be used as a guide to assist individuals and the community to manage the re-establishment of those elements of society necessary for their wellbeing.

The process of ‘Recovery’ requires practical planning, management and support which is sensitive to community needs and the physical and political environment where there is constantly changing demands. This Relief and Recovery Plan will assist with the cooperation amongst participating agencies and ensure support arrangements are adaptable, effective and coordinated.

1.3 Recovery management principals

The following Recovery Management Principles are consistent with the DHHS Management Guidelines and Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV).

They include:

- Management and service provision will be devoted as much as possible at Municipal level. State and Regional recovery strategies, services and resources will supplement and complement the municipalities’ initiatives rather than replace local endeavours.

- Emergency Recovery is a supporting and enabling process that allows individuals, families and communities to regain their former levels of functioning through the provision of information, specialist services and resources. Emphasis will be given to supporting and maintaining the integrity, dignity and autonomy of affected individuals, families and the community.
- Effective recovery requires the establishment of planning and management arrangements that are understood and accepted by recovery agencies, control agencies and the community;
- Recovery management arrangements are most effective when they recognise the complex, dynamic and protracted nature of recovery processes and the changing needs of affected individuals, families and community groups over time;
- The management of emergency recovery is best approached from a community development perspective and is most effective when conducted at a local level with the active participation of the affected community and a maximum reliance on local capacities and expertise;
- Recovery management is most effective when human service agencies play a major role in all levels of key decision-making. Wherever possible the normal municipal management and administrative structures and practices will be used, ensuring that these structures and practices will be responsive to the special needs and circumstances of the affected community.
- Emergency recovery is best achieved where the recovery process begins immediately. Recovery information and recovery services need to be readily available to affected individuals, families and communities and responsive to their needs and expectations.
- Planning and management arrangements are more effective if training programs and exercises have prepared recovery agencies and personnel for their roles; and
- Emergency recovery is most effective where management provides a comprehensive and integrated framework. Assistance measures should be provided in a timely, fair, equitable manner and be sufficiently flexible to respond to diverse community needs. Management of Recovery will involve processes of consultation and cooperation through established communication channels.

1.4 Emergency management documentation and related plans

For a complete understanding of Emergency Management and how it relates to each municipality, this document should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Emergency Management Act 1986
- Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)
- DHHS BSW Regional Emergency Recovery Plan
- Emergency Relief Centre Standard Operating Guidelines – Otway District Relief & Recovery Collaboration

1.4.1 Municipal Emergency sub plans and relevant documents

| SURF COAST SHIRE | COLAC OTWAY SHIRE | CORANGAMITE SHIRE |
|---|---|---|
| Municipal Emergency Management Plan | Municipal Emergency Management Plan | Municipal Emergency Management Plan |
| Municipal Fire Management Plan | Municipal Fire Management Plan | Municipal Fire Management Plan |
| Heatwave Plan | Heatwave Plan | Heatwave Plan |
| * Influenza Pandemic Plan | Pandemic Influenza Plan | * Influenza Pandemic Plan |
| * Flood Emergency Plan | Flood Emergency Plan | * Flood Emergency Plan |
| Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan | Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan | Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan |
| * MRM Standard Operating Guidelines | * MRM Standard Operating Guidelines | * MRM Standard Operating Guidelines |
| * Business Continuity Plan (in progress) | * Business Continuity Plan | * Business Continuity Plan |
| Otway District Relief & Recovery Collaboration | | |
| Emergency Relief & Recovery Plan | | |
| Emergency Relief Centre Standard Operating Guidelines | | |

* Contact MERO for a copy of this plan

1.4.2 Emergency Management Act 1986

The Emergency Management Act 1986 aims to ensure that components of emergency management such as prevention, response and recovery are organised within a structure which facilitates planning, preparedness, operational coordination and community participation.

Link to the *Emergency Management Act 1986*: www.ema.gov.au.

1.4.3 Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)

These guidelines assist local government managers and planners to prepare and maintain a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

They help councils meet their safety obligations to their communities, outline their roles and responsibilities, under legislation, to prepare emergency management plans and provide advice on the planning process.

They are also a valuable resource to planners in community level agencies and emergency management organisations.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with the State Emergency Response Plan and the State Emergency Recovery Plan. Link to the [Emergency Management Manual Victoria](#).

1.4.4 Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)

Each Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan details the agreed arrangements as required by section 20 of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* for the prevention of, the response to, and the recovery from, emergencies that could occur in or involve the Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and/or Corangamite Shire.

The MEMP is the overarching plan which describes the broad methodology that Councils and the Emergency Services will follow in managing various emergency events.

The MEMP has the following objectives to:

- Identify and treat potential risks to the community and the environment;
- Develop and administer programs that reduce the community's vulnerability and increase its capacity for resilience and self-reliance;
- Link more closely emergency management and other community safety programs and promote synergies;
- Contribute to the management of emergency events; and
- Prepare a Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

The MEMP also identifies strategies to work toward achieving objectives through:

- Undertaking the risk analysis and treatment processes;
- Developing a resilience and vulnerability profile;
- Conducting the Municipal Emergency Management Planning process;
- Developing ideas for involving the community in this process; and
- Identifying municipal resources to be used in emergency response and recovery.

1.4.5 DHHS Barwon South West Region Regional Emergency Recovery Plan

The DHHS BSWR Regional Emergency Recovery Plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of Agencies involved in the recovery process at a regional level and provides a management framework for recovery where more than one Municipality is involved.

1.4.6 Business Continuity Plan

The Business Continuity Plan aims to ensure that critical business functions will be available during an incident that results in disruption to normal operational capability.

Recovery from any incident affecting Council operations and the implementation of the Contingency Plan are administered by the Disaster Recovery Committee.

1.4.7 Heatwave Plan

The Heatwave Plan addresses the public health effect and impacts of heatwaves in the community. It outlines the arrangements in place to assist the community to deal with and recover from heatwave events.

1.4.8 Influenza Pandemic Plan

The Pandemic Plans have been developed by Councils to reduce the impacts of an influenza pandemic on the community as well as provide support and recovery assistance throughout the duration of the influenza pandemic.

1.4.9 ERC Standard Operating Guidelines

This document provides a guideline for the activation, operation and running of an ERC as well as specific arrangements for nominated ERC's in each Council's municipality. This approach has been adopted to ensure that all emergencies of a large scale can be adequately resourced to ensure the community's safety and welfare.

Refer to: Otway District Collaboration ERC Standard Operating Guidelines

1.4.10 MRM Operational Guidelines

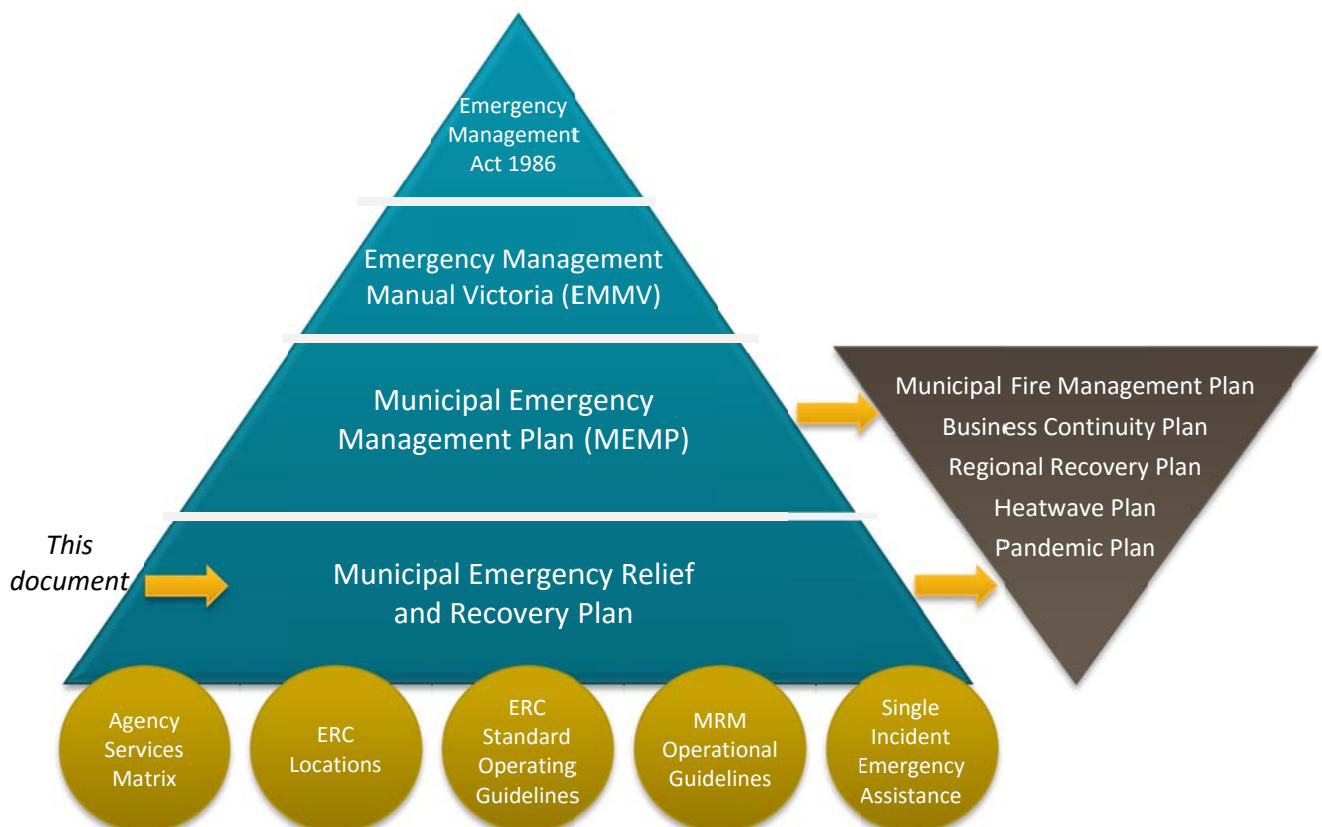
The MRM Operational Guidelines have been developed to outline the process undertaken by the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) and Deputy Recovery Managers following the notification of an emergency or a pending emergency.

It has been developed to provide both MRMs and Deputy MRMs with sufficient guidance to perform the required recovery duties.

1.5 Document structure

This Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan for the Otway District Relief & Recovery Collaboration constitutes only the relief and recovery portions of each Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). This Plan should be taken into context and therefore should be implemented in conjunction with the MEMP, Municipal Emergency Sub-Plans relevant to *Recovery and information which forms part of the overall MEMP for response and recovery*.

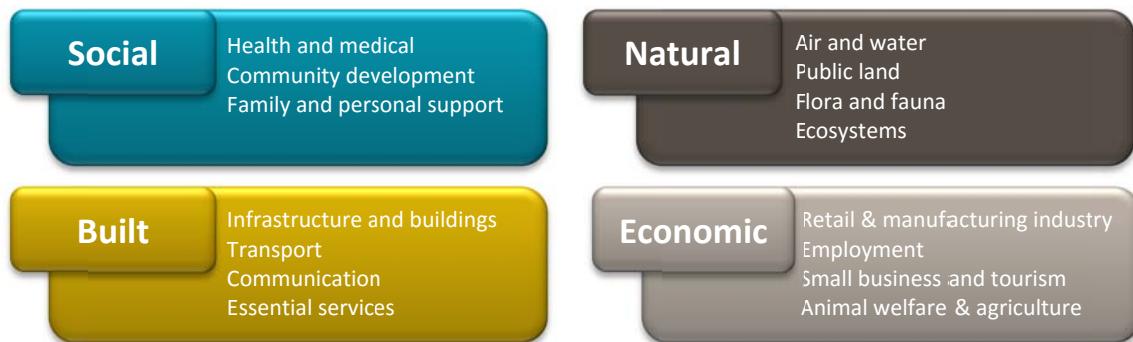
The following diagram outlines the 'hierarchy' documentation structure in place:



1.6 Functional areas of recovery

As outlined in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV), there are four key functional areas that require the application of coordination and support arrangements as part of the recovery process.

These could also be referred to as the ‘four community environments’ and focus on the various needs of the community within each environment.



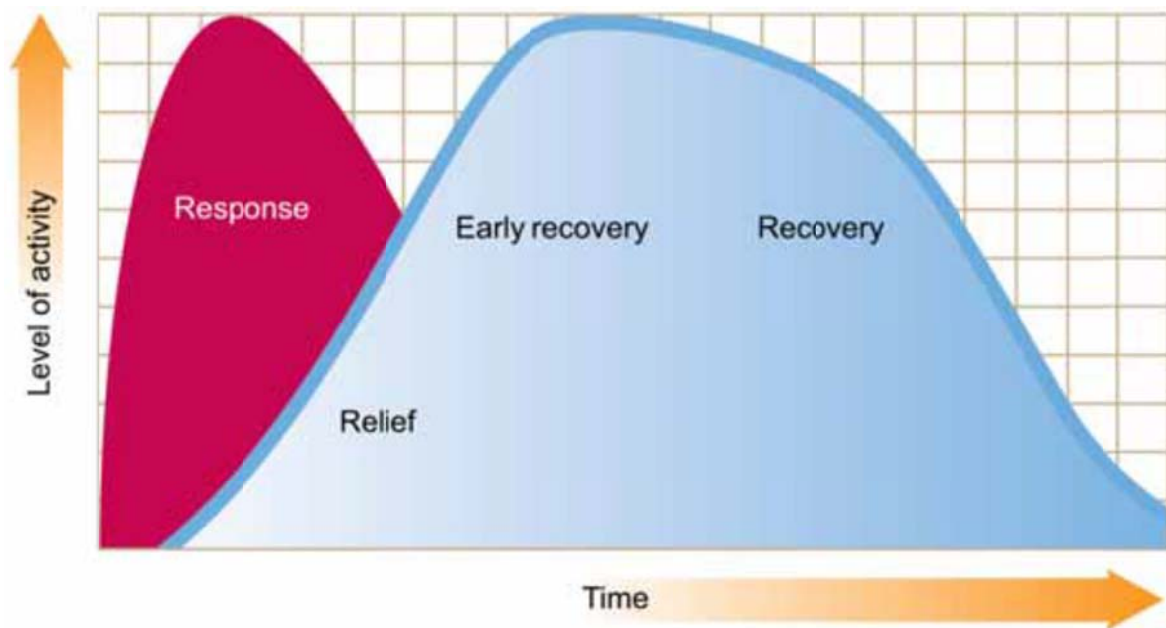
Recovery planning should address each of these functional areas and provide for the engagement of agencies that can assist with the recovery.

Refer to [Part 5](#) for further details regarding resources and support for the ‘four functional areas of recovery’

1.7 Relief and Recovery phases

It is important to understand the continuum that extends from response, immediate relief, relief, early recovery to recovery and how this affects the overarching services (and the necessary coordination between services) to achieve the best outcomes for impacted communities. As soon as Response to an emergency (as outlined in the MEMP) has commenced the Relief and Recovery phases need to be considered and/or mobilised.

The diagram below describes the relationship between response, relief and recovery in relation to time progression from impact and highlights some of the services that may be provided.



1.7.1 Emergency Relief

Emergency Relief is part of emergency management as a whole. Emergency Relief is the provision of essential needs to individuals, families and communities in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. Coordination of Emergency Relief at the Municipal level is the responsibility of the MRM, at State and Regional level, this coordination function rests with the DHHS.

The primary functions of emergency relief are:

- Catering (food and water);
- Material needs (non-food items);
- Emergency shelter (accommodation);
- Provision of Emergency Relief Centres; and
- Registration – *Register.Find.Reunite*

Other functions of emergency relief typically include:

- First Aid and primary care;
- Personal support, including financial assistance;
- Sanitation and hygiene; and
- Information provision.

For more detailed information in relation to roles, responsibilities and functions of Emergency Relief refer *Appendix C: ERC Standard Operating Guidelines*.

The following people have the authority to activate the provision of emergency relief services (including but not limited to emergency relief centres):

- The appointed MERC;
- The MERO; and
- The MRM.

1.7.2 Emergency Recovery

Emergency recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency affected communities in the restoration of their emotional, economic and physical well-being, plus the reconstruction of physical infrastructure and rehabilitation of the natural environment. The process of recovery begins as soon as possible when an emergency occurs, and may continue for many years post emergency.

Management of recovery occurs in the context of clear and agreed arrangements, and involves processes of consultation and cooperation through established communication channels. Whenever possible, short and longer term recovery activities will become part of core business to ensure they remain responsive to the needs of the affected community.

Recovery from an emergency event starts as soon as the threat to human life subsides and in many cases occurs alongside emergency relief activities. In Victoria, recovery is defined as a developmental process of assisting individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities to manage the re-establishment of those elements of society necessary for their wellbeing and to re-establish community functioning. Recovery concludes with transition to community renewal and the realisation of a changed reality. The diagram in Part 1.7 above describes the transition from emergency below impact through to 'community renewal' with the intent to a more informed and resilient community.

1.8 Emergency Relief Centre model

The ERC model is based on a hierarchy and the categorisation of emergencies using a 'tier' rating:

| Category | Description | Relief Centre | Relief Centre staff resources |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Tier 1 (Small Scale) | Geographically contained and has relatively limited impacts | Local Emergency Relief Centres | Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) ERC Administration |
| Tier 2 (Medium Scale) | Likely to be geographically larger and has relatively serious impacts | Determined based on location | Selected ERC Teams |
| Tier 3 (Large Scale) | Wide geographical impact with high order impacts | Determined based on location | Full deployment of ERC Teams with rostered shifts |

Commonly the majority of emergency events are Tier 1 category. This will generally only require the support of the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) and Emergency Relief Centre Administration.

This document and the arrangements outlined in this document are aimed at events categorised as medium or large (Tier 2/3) scale.

A Tier 1 event may only require the opening of a venue and setting up the venue with resource kits. If the emergency escalates, and a Local Emergency Relief Centres is no longer appropriate, a Tier 2/3 ERC will be activated.

2 Roles and responsibilities

The diagram below outlines the structure of emergency management committees at each of the Otway District municipalities. These committees have a vital role in emergency management.

| Surf Coast Shire <i>MEMPC Chair: Manager, Community Safety & Environment</i> | Colac Otway Shire <i>MEMPC Chair:****</i> | Corangamite Shire <i>MEMPC Chair:****</i> |
|--|--|--|
| Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee | Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee | Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee |
| Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee | Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee | Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee |
| Cross Council Relief & Recovery Committee | Cross Council Relief & Recovery Committee | Cross Council Relief & Recovery Committee |
| Municipal Recovery Committee Community Recovery Committee (CRC) | | |
| Community Emergency Risk Assessment Sub Committees Events Sub Committee | Events Sub-Committee | |
| Others as required: Heatwave Committee Surf Safety Working Group Flood Planning Committee | Others as required: | Others as required: |
| Otway District Relief & Recovery Collaboration | | |
| Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee | | |

2.1 Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)

Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees are established pursuant to the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, Sections 21(3) & (4).

MEMPCs are one component of a broader structure that enables appropriate planning, response and recovery activities and arrangements at local and regional levels, with sub-committees and working groups who are responsible for planning for fire management, flood management and relief and recovery.

MEMPCs are required to prepare a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP), which documents response and recovery operational arrangements, and to ensure that arrangements outlined in the plan are adequately provided for. The MEMPCs have an ongoing role to review and amend the operational components of the MEMPs.

It is not the role of the MEMPCs to manage emergencies. This is the responsibility of the agencies and personnel identified under the response and recovery arrangements.

Refer to each Council's *MEMP* for more information on the roles and responsibilities of the MEMPC.

2.2 Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee

Planning & Preparedness:

Planning for a major emergency cannot be done in isolation as there would be a call on many recovery services involving numerous people and agencies. To address that concern, the Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee has been established across Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Corangamite Shire to develop strong inter-agency relationships, build capacity through training and coordinate the planning process.

This committee is a subcommittee of each council's Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and is made up of internal representatives from the three council's, relevant community representatives and Agency representatives. The committee is responsible for coordinating recovery planning and preparedness for the three municipalities.

The MRM is the chair of this committee and the committee meets on a quarterly basis.

Activation Phase:

After an emergency event has occurred or is about to occur, the recovery committee is responsible to:

- Provide a representative to attend the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC) when requested (usually MRM or deputy);
- Manage the recovery process at the local level, ensuring that community needs are met, either through local resources or by the acquisition of appropriate resources from the regional/district level; and provision by member agencies of a range of specific recovery services;
- Conduct post-impact needs assessments (gathering and processing of information);
- Work with the Community Recovery Committee to activate and coordinate recovery service delivery;
- Report regularly on the progress and ongoing needs of the community to relevant Council's Emergency Management Group and DHHS;
- Advise other supporting agencies and the State Government;
- Monitor the progress of recovery;
- Provide and manage community development services;
- Manage and/or coordinate volunteer helpers;
- Provide staff for Emergency Relief Centre(s); and
- Organise, manage or assist with public appeals.

In the advent of an emergency occurring this Committee will be required to establish a plan for the recovery process.

2.3 Community Recovery Committee (CRC)

One of the most effective means of involving the community is through a community recovery committee. These committees comprise representatives of government, private and voluntary agencies, as well as local councils, ethnic leaders and other representative members of an affected community.

Community recovery committees provide a mechanism through which information, resources and services may be coordinated in support of an affected community. These committees

also provide a useful source of information and advice for the affected community and recovery agencies.

The advantages of community recovery committees include:

- Reinforcement of local and community orientation of the recovery process;
- Recognition of the common interests of members of the affected community;
- Ensuring the equitable application of resources and services;
- Establishing a mechanism for the identification and prioritisation of community needs;
- Overall monitoring of the recovery process; and
- Providing a means for identifying needs which cannot be met from within the community and which require resource support from other sources.

Community recovery committees may emerge spontaneously as a result of local leadership.

If an emergency affects different parts of the municipality, community recovery committees for each of the affected areas may need to be set up. Council's role in this process is to sponsor and facilitate the meetings.

Where an event has an impact on a number of communities, it may be appropriate to establish a local recovery committee for each affected locality. In these instances, a central community recovery committee may also be necessary to provide an overall forum for advice, consultation and coordination.

2.4 Planning and preparation phase

Planning and preparing for emergencies includes a range of activities that require the allocation of resources (human and financial) and the support of agencies to ensure a coordinated and well planned approach.

Preparedness takes many forms, including planning, training, exercising, purchase of infrastructure and the development and implementation of programs. Whilst much of this work is integrated within the everyday business and activities of Council and agencies, community preparedness is an important component.

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of those parties involved in emergency recovery.

2.4.1 Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

The MRM has responsibility for the coordination of municipal resources in emergency recovery, and is required to take an active role in ongoing recovery planning and preparedness.

The MRM is responsible to:

- Attend regular MEMPC meetings;
- Coordinate and chair the Emergency Recovery meetings; and
- Update this Relief and Recovery Plan when required.

The MRM will consistently work with the MERO to ensure planning and preparedness activities are established and linkages are current and unified between the MEMP and the Recovery Plan.

2.4.2 Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM)

The MEM has responsibility to establish a more coordinated approach to emergency management processes and practices across the organisation.

The MEM will also attend ongoing planning and preparation meetings with the MEMPC and Emergency Recovery meetings.

2.4.3 Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO)

The MERO has responsibility for the coordination of municipal resources in emergency response, and is required to take an active role in ongoing emergency planning and preparedness.

The MERO is responsible to coordinate the MEMPC meetings and update the MEMP when required.

The MERO has full delegation of powers to deploy and manage Council's resources during emergencies.

2.4.4 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

The DHHS are responsible for key areas in Victoria's emergency management arrangements as outlined in the EMMV.

In the planning and preparation phases of relief and recovery DHHS are responsible for:

- Conducting community training and awareness activities (including promoting awareness of safe practices and emergency procedures and implementing safety and warning systems for relevant DHHS clients);
- Coordinating recovery planning and management at state and regional levels;
- Coordinating all aspects of recovery, including State/Commonwealth departments, local government, non-government organisations and agencies;
- Coordinating recovery activities in consideration of:
 - The people, social, health and community environment
 - The economic environment
 - The natural environment
 - The built environment.
- Coordinating provision of personal support (psychological first aid and emotional spiritual care) at incident sites and across the community;
- Providing community information and facilitate community redevelopment programs; and
- Supporting councils and Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees in recovery planning.

In the planning and preparation phases of relief and recovery DH are responsible for:

- Enhancing prevention, preparedness, response and recovery services for a major mass casualty incident or major natural disaster in Victoria;
- Implementing legislation, programs and monitoring procedures to minimise public health risk from infectious diseases, contaminated food, contaminated water supplies and radiation and chemicals; and
- Working with DHHS in the Coordination of recovery planning and management at state and regional levels, including State/Commonwealth departments, local government, non-government organisations and agencies.

2.5 Activation phase

Once an emergency event has occurred or is about to occur, there is a need for a range of activities that require the allocation of resources (human and financial) and the support of agencies to ensure there is a coordinated and well planned approach.

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities following activation (event has occurred or about to occur)

2.5.1 Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM)

Depending upon the nature and location of the event and the affected community, a range of issues may emerge. The MRM should, in conjunction with the Emergency Recovery Committee, delegate responsibilities as required.

Some issues will be the responsibility of other supporting agencies or particular unit's of council (ie. public health, infrastructure).

Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating municipal and community resources within the municipality during recovery;
- Immediately following an emergency, assisting with: the collation and evaluation of information gathered in the post impact assessment and the establishment of priorities for the restoration of community services and needs;
- Liaising with the MERO for the best use of municipal resources to enable the recovery by individuals or the community from the effects of an emergency;
- Liaising, consult and negotiate on behalf of the affected area with recovery agencies and the municipality;
- Liaising with the Regional Recovery Management Committee and/or DHHS;
- Undertaking specific recovery activities as determined by the municipality; and
- Setting up a monitoring and reporting mechanism for reporting to stakeholders (community, council and state).

The MRM has full delegated powers to deploy and manage council's resources during emergencies.

The MRM may delegate duties to provide for effective management of the recovery functions.

Refer to *Appendix C: ERC Standard Operating Guidelines* for more detailed responsibilities for the MRM and Deputy MRM after 'Activation'.

2.5.2 Municipal Emergency Manager (MEM)

The MEM will help to ensure there is a coordinated approach to emergency management processes and practices across the organisation.

The MEM will assist the MERO and/or MRM with response or relief and recovery requirements following an emergency event.

2.5.3 Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO)

After an emergency event has occurred or is about to occur, the MERO is responsible for the following:

- Coordination of Municipal Resources in responding to Emergencies;
- Establish and maintain an effective infrastructure of personnel whereby Municipal Resources can be accessed on a 24 hour basis;
- Establish and maintain liaison with agencies within or servicing municipal district and the Municipal Recovery Manager;
- Establish and maintain the Municipality Emergency Coordination Centre(s) at a level of preparedness to ensure prompt activation when necessary;
- Facilitate the arrangement of a post emergency debrief as requested by the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator;
- Ensure procedures and systems are in place to monitor and record all expenditure by the Municipality in relation to emergencies; and
- Coordinate the annual exercising/testing of the Municipal Emergency Management arrangements.

2.5.4 Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC)

After an emergency event has occurred or is about to occur, the MERC is responsible for the following:

- Attending the MECC assuming the role of Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) (refer to the MECC guidelines for details of the role of the MERC in the MECC);
- Liaise with local control authorities and support agencies and ensure that an effective control structure has been established by agencies in coping with an emergency at municipal level;
- Obtain and forward regular advice to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC) of potential emergencies which are not under substantial control of the control agency;
- Maintain an awareness of local resources which may be utilised in an emergency; and
- Convene post emergency de-briefing conferences as soon as practicable after a local emergency when required.

2.5.5 Media and Public Relations Officer

It is important that Councils Media and Communications are thoroughly briefed and involved throughout the recovery process.

The Media/Public Relations Officer, from each of Council, is responsible to ensure information is provided to the media and the community in an accurate and timely manner. This will help alleviate confusion and distress. It is important to consider the needs of the affected community and the use of translated information and interpreters when required.

The Media/Public Relations Officer will coordinate each Council's community and media information activities during and after an emergency, including:

- Support the relevant authorities (eg. Police media, CFA media, etc) in the dissemination of accurate and timely media information and advice; and
- Undertake the management and dissemination of accurate and timely information relating to Council's response and recovery activities.

The following media protocols will be adhered to:

- Media enquiries will be responded to as soon as possible – within 24 hours or sooner whenever possible;
- Directors are authorised to speak with journalists for the primary purpose of providing background and technical information, and on operational matters. This is preferable to preparing and providing detailed email responses;
- Opinion and comments of a political nature can only be given by Councillors;
- Where the media requires a quote, and the appropriate councillor is unavailable, quotes should in the first instance be sought from the Mayor. If the Mayor is unavailable, quotes may be attributed to a Council spokesperson;
- The Mayor is usually the spokesperson for Council and can discuss matters that have been subject to an adopted Council resolution, and deal with television and radio interviews relating to major issues and enquiries;
- The Chief Executive Officer may, in certain circumstances, be the spokesperson when the issue is operational in nature, or the matter has been delegated by the Mayor.

The CEO, General Managers, Councillors and the Mayor must closely liaise with the Media and Public Relations Officer prior to providing any statement to ensure they have the correct and most up-to-date information.

2.5.6 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

The DHHS are responsible for key areas in the activation phase of relief and recovery as stated in the EMMV.

In the activation phase of relief and recovery DHHS are responsible for:

- Coordinating provision of personal support (psychological first aid and emotional spiritual care) at incident sites and across the community;
- Providing community information and facilitate community redevelopment programs;
- Supporting councils, Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees and community recovery committees in managing recovery activities;
- Providing advice, information and assistance to affected individuals, communities, funded agencies and municipal councils; and
- Coordinating provision of interim accommodation following emergencies with major housing impacts.

In the activation phase of relief and recovery DH are responsible for:

- Providing advice, information and assistance to affected individuals, communities, funded agencies and municipal councils.

2.5.7 VCC Emergencies Ministry

Personal Support and Outreach

VCC Emergencies Ministry provide volunteers to administer personal support (psychological first aid and emotional spiritual care) and outreach services.

2.5.8 Australian Red Cross

National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS), also known as *Register.Find.Reunite*

Australian Red Cross will provide volunteers to administer the registration process for evacuated people to relief centres.

Personal Support

Australian Red Cross has capacity to be able to provide some personal support and outreach services.

Food and Water

Australian Red Cross catering teams can attend the relief centre to provide meals for evacuees and are also available to provide for emergency service personnel. Australian Red Cross can also assist with food and water for isolated communities where they may not be able to access food through supermarkets etc.

Refer to [Appendix A: Services and agencies for recovery](#) for a full list of recovery services provided by agencies and other organisations.

Refer to *Appendix C: ERC Standard Operating Guidelines* for further information on roles and responsibilities of the Australian Red Cross.

2.5.9 Communications

Victoria Police is the delegated primary support agency responsible for communications, in accordance with Emergency Management Manual Victoria.

All agencies having a role in these arrangements are responsible for the provision of their own internal communications systems during emergencies. Any agency requiring communications will put their request to the MERC (Victoria Police).

The MRM and the Deputy MRM will have access to appropriate telecommunication to ensure they are contactable throughout an emergency.

The Telstra line network will be the initial and primary means of communication in the event of an emergency when it is available and should be utilised to capacity where possible.

Additional telephones can be provided by Telstra upon request to the MERC or done through local arrangements, who will in turn, submit such requests to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator for action. All costs related to such installations are the responsibility of the requesting organisation.

3 Recovery planning and preparedness

3.1 Ongoing planning and preparedness

The Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) Plan (contained within the MEMP) identifies the types of risks within the municipality, makes predictions on their likelihood of occurring and degree of impact, but doesn't consider their implications for the recovery process.

Planning and preparedness arrangements for a major emergency cannot be done in isolation as there is usually a call on many recovery services involving numerous people and agencies during the recovery phase. To address that concern, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway and Corangamite Shires have established the Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee to coordinate the planning process, undertake preparedness activities, develop and maintain strong inter-agency relationships and build capacity through training of staff.

Refer to [Section 2.3](#) for further details regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Community Recovery Committees.

The following recovery functions must be considered in recovery planning and preparedness activities:

| Function | Description |
|--|---|
| Accommodation | Provision of emergency / temporary accommodation |
| Aged and Disability Support / Vulnerable Community Members | Plan and coordinate the recovery process for aged and disabled as well as other vulnerable community members |
| Animal Welfare | Assist/destroy injured animals. Coordinate the disposal of dead animals. Coordinate emergency feed supplies. Identify holding areas and provide cages etc. |
| Catering | Provide sustenance as required to emergency service personnel and emergency affected people |
| Children's Services | Plan and coordinate the recovery process for children under 12 years of age and provide child care to ERCs |
| Clean-up / Equipment Provision | Plan and coordinate the clean-up process including the provision of temporary resources as required (eg. toilets, generators, earthmoving equipment etc) |
| Communication | Coordinate and provide accurate information to the public and media after an emergency |
| Community Development | Coordinate community consultation and activities that will assist communities recover from the impacts of an emergency |
| Donation Coordination | Coordinate the collection and distribution of donated goods, services and money |
| Economic Development | Coordinate and initiate economic development activities to assist local businesses to recover |
| Environment | Assess, advise and repair damage after an event including tree safety, replanting / re-vegetation; erosion prevention and control |
| Environmental Health | Assess, advise and minimise the public health impact of an emergency (eg. safe water, food safety/disposal, septic systems, safe disposal of waste, provision of temporary toilets/facilities, the spread |

| Function | Description |
|------------------------|--|
| | of infectious disease and impacts of heat related illness) |
| ERC Management | Coordinate and staff ERCs. Maintain centre register and support resources |
| Fencing | Coordinate the reconstruction of boundary fencing immediately after an incident in cases where animals need to be contained |
| Financial Assistance | Coordinate the distribution of financial aid to individuals and communities |
| Infrastructure | Rebuild and restore community infrastructure / utilities after an emergency |
| Material Aid | Coordinate distribution of material aid to affected members of the community |
| Personal Support | Coordinate the provision of personal support psychological first aid and emotional spiritual care |
| Transport | Assist in transport provision after an incident so that those affected can access relief centre, recovery services, shopping etc. |
| Volunteer Coordination | Support and coordinate the registration and work of volunteers and assist other recovery service areas through the provision of volunteers |

It is important to assess the impact of each event to determine what services should be made available. The delivery of recovery services will be undertaken by agencies nominated in the MEMP, Relief and Recovery Plan and/or the Regional Recovery Plan.

3.2 Regional recovery planning

There is a requirement for regional recovery planning to be undertaken and maintained because many emergencies traverse municipal boundaries, and also because major state services are administered and delivered at a regional level.

Regional Recovery Plans are established based on DHHS regions given that DHHS, as a principal recovery agency, is well placed to convene and support regional recovery planning committees.

Planning at this level should identify resources and services which:

- Can be made available after an emergency regardless of the location of the emergency;
- Need to be outsourced or obtained outside the councils municipal area; and
- Are comprehensive and available to the recovery effort.

Regional plans address inter-agency issues such as the coordination of activities and programs, and the establishment and operation of Community Recovery Committees. Such plans are separate from, but complimentary to the plans of individual agencies and municipal councils.

This Cross Council Relief and Recovery Committee is currently working to establish;

- Identification and agreement on the location of Shared/Regional ERCs;
- Guidelines for the recruitment of staff for ERCs; and

- Standard Operating Procedures for the activation, management and operation of ERCs.

The Otway District Relief & Recovery Collaboration believes that a 'collaborative' approach would be beneficial based on the following:

- Emergency events of 2009 highlighted that in major emergency events, the resources of a single Council are insufficient and shared resources must be mobilised;
- Increasing collaborative approaches are being undertaken in other regions in Victoria;
- Enhanced need for consistency and coordination in approaches;
- More formalised reciprocal arrangements must be in place between Councils, to avoid an over reliance on personal relationships;
- Lack of a common framework may result in delays, which would carry a huge consequence for the impacted community;
- The risk profile of the type and scale of emergencies is changing;
- Boundaries between public sector agencies are now aligning;
- Local government lacks a central point of coordination on emergency management.

By working together through collaboration, it is envisaged that the following could be achieved:

- A sustainable and coherent, high level framework for regional cooperation;
- The establishment of relationships and governance that will underpin the success of any cooperation;
- A cooperation model that can continuously improve / evolve and remain applicable over time.

3.3 Emergency Relief Centre preparedness

The relevant council's MEMP and this Relief and Recovery Plan identify appropriate ERCs. These sites have been communicated to the MEMPC, but not to the general community. Councils have considered a range of factors when checking a site's suitability, such as:

- Capacity – for both day usage and potential for overnight accommodation;
- Location relative to current and anticipated population concentrations in the municipality;
- Having sufficient distance from potential risks/threats to the site and its surrounding area (eg. in the event of a flood, do not select a site close to a river);
- Normal usage and availability;
- Contractual / lease arrangements for the site, particularly for sites that are not Council owned or run, which stipulate that the facility can be taken over and used as an emergency relief centre;
- Its availability at short notice, with 24/7 access; and
- Its proximity to adjacent buildings that may also be utilised.

The building of new council facilities, or sites coming under the control of Council, represents an opportunity to consider them as an ERC.

3.3.1 Site assessments

Councils have accountability in ensuring MEMP's contain an up-to-date list of an appropriate number of sites. There is no prescribed number of ERC sites a municipality must have, nor a capacity that should be obtained for a site to be considered an ERC. These are factors which should be considered based on the needs of the municipality's community. The MRM (or their delegates) are responsible for assessing the suitability of ERC sites.

ERCs will be site assessed:

- Annually;
- After an emergency event;
- When there are significant changes made to an existing ERC site; or
- When a potentially new ERC is built.

When conducting a site assessment of an ERC, the following is considered:

- Visiting the site with appropriate Council staff such as the site manager, or a person who has an operational knowledge of it, and an EHO (if possible);
- Conducting the assessment at a time which minimises its impact on community users;
- Using a defined set of criteria against which sites will be commonly assessed – an example 'ERC Site Assessment Checklist' is provided in [Appendix B: ERC Facilities](#);
- Accessing the site's floor plan in hard copy and electronically;
- Overlaying the 'normal usage' floor plan, with an 'ERC usage' floor plan; this is called a 'Mud Map' which can be stored on network drives.
- To educate Council staff who may be unfamiliar with the sites, it may also be useful to take photos of the ERC and store them with the Mud Map; and
- Recording the outcomes of the assessment.

Once the ERCs are assessed, the results are collated and any outstanding items (eg. site maintenance) are actioned. As a result of the audit, a site might be rejected, for example, the site's use has changed significantly since it was last assessed, a number of Council's criteria cannot be met; or as a result of a major Occupational Health and Safety breach.

Note: All ERC Site Assessments are appropriately 'signed off' by councils Relief & Recovery Committee or MEMP Committee.

An emergency relief centre will not necessarily be assessed for its capability to provide longer term services, since its focus will be on immediate short term needs.

3.3.2 Consultation

When conducting ERC Planning, consultations may be held with those who might provide services at the ERC to agree on arrangements, such as:

- DHHS;
- VCC Emergencies Ministry;
- Australian Red Cross;
- VicSES;
- Support Agencies; and Other Service Providers.

All locally agreed arrangements are documented in the municipality's MEMP and where necessary, formalised in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or service level agreement (SLA) between the parties.

An example matrix of the possible agencies and services provided at an ERC is contained in [Appendix A: Services and agencies for recovery](#).

3.3.3 Special considerations

Depending on the nature and location of the emergency, the groups of affected persons presenting themselves at an ERC may be quite variable. Some emergencies will have had a greater impact on certain individuals than others. The table below provides examples of possible vulnerable groups, together with some factors to consider.

It is recognised that not all specific needs can be met when delivering relief services, and certain needs may have to be addressed on a 'best endeavours' basis. Council should not feel it must take sole responsibility for such individuals, but will look to engage with providers who have expertise in the various groups. Planning should consider establishing and maintaining strong working relationships with local expert providers.

Affected persons who require additional assistance and consideration are generally identified during the registration process by Australian Red Cross. However, it is important that their needs are considered prior to an emergency event. If in the opinion of the Relief Centre Manager, it is inappropriate for individuals with special requirements to be at the ERC, Council should work with expert providers to identify suitable alternative arrangements.

Any information regarding individuals, who require additional services, whether medical or otherwise, must be carefully protected.

| Group | Possible sources of support / expertise | Some factors to consider |
|--|---|---|
| Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) | <p>Council's social / community liaison officers</p> <p>Community and religious leaders</p> <p>Telephone interpreter services (TIS)</p> <p>VCC Emergencies Ministry has an MoU with Islamic Council of Victoria and relationships with other religious and cultural communities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home country experiences of emergencies • Translation of written materials • Provision of interpreters • Additional support at registration • Dietary requirements • Food preparation • Special washing practices • Items and clothing of special cultural or religious significance • History between nationalities and ethnicities • Cultural norms • Prayer mats / religious needs • Segregated sleeping • Preferred community networks and channels for receiving information |

| Group | Possible sources of support / expertise | Some factors to consider |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Mentally and/or Physically Disabled | Health Service Providers Case Workers Carers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to relief centre • Case management provision • Provision of relief services in the home environment • Providing an area within the ERC that is private • Discussion with health care providers on any specialised resources that may be required. • Allowance for a 'fast track' registration to negate the need to queue • Allow carers to provide continuity of care • Plan for attendant care at relief centres for vulnerable groups that would receive in home support services • Note: Often it is best to seek guidance and advice from the individuals with the disabilities themselves. They are the best resource for information on how best to assist them. |
| Visually /Hearing Impaired | VicDeaf Royal Society for Blind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional support at registration • Consider suitable signage • Provide assistance with equipment such as phones • Make audio announcements available visually • Obtain qualified sign language interpreters. • Place such individuals in areas that allow for easy access to toilets /washrooms. • Provide volunteer readers |
| Young | Early Years Services Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Kindergartens and schools Local toy library / family day care service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider relief centres integrated with or in proximity to child care facilities • Provide age-appropriate recreation opportunities (eg. TV, DVD, music, toys, books, playground) • Provide baby/young children's equipment • Monitor for any instances of bullying between children • Consider giving teenagers appropriate roles to support relief functions (eg. making tea) • Consider using wrist bands for identification, as a security measure • Note: Anybody given duties to provide childcare must be appropriately qualified, and anyone (staff and volunteers) with formal duties which bring them into contact with children, must have a valid Working with Children Check completed. |
| Elderly | Council's Aged Services Carers Ability Support Services Health and Community Care National Disability Insurance Scheme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the ERC • Past experiences of emergencies • Provision of interpreters • Additional support at registration • Dietary requirements • Access to and storage of medications • Additional support with written materials and other communications • Provision of relief services in the home environment • Notifications to family / personal support networks |

| Group | Possible sources of support / expertise | Some factors to consider |
|---|---|---|
| Injured or ill (as a result of the emergency) | Ambulance Victoria St John Ambulance GPs | St John or accredited first aiders can provide basic first aid if ERC environment is suitable. If additional treatment is required, refer affected persons to local hospitals. For more information please refer to the State Health Emergency Response Plan (SHERP). |
| Pre-existing medical conditions | Pharmacy Guild and local pharmacists GPs | Determine and source any required medications. |
| Persons of Interest (eg. criminals) | VicPol | Anyone who is known or suspected of conducting criminal activity should be highlighted to VicPol at the earliest opportunity. |
| Pets | Council's Animal Management teams Local Vets Local Animal Shelters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing pets in an appropriate environment external to the ERC • Feeding needs • Responding to injured animals • Affected individuals' emotions when separated from their pets • Note: Animals trained to provide assistance to individuals with disabilities, are the only exception to being permitted into the ERC. |

3.3.4 ERC trailers and mobile kits

Two Emergency Relief Centre trailers have been sourced and stocked with items that would be immediately required to activate an ERC. These trailers are stored at Torquay and Colac and will be dispatched when an ERC is activated. Stock and equipment from the trailers should be closely monitored and managed to assist in the restocking process after they have been activated. ERC Mobile Kits are also maintained by Councils for small scale ERC activations. The MRM (or their delegate) is responsible for establishing and regularly checking the ERC trailers and Mobile Kits.

Refer to *Appendix C: ERC Standard Operating Guidelines*, for detailed information on the contents and management of the ERC trailers and Mobile Kits.

3.4 Training

The Otway District Relief & Recovery Collaboration recognises the importance of training in building capacity and preparedness. Various training sessions are held at least annually for municipal staff who have been selected to become part of the Emergency Recovery Team or who are already part of the Emergency Relief and Recovery Team at each of the Councils. Training records are held on all members of the Relief Team as well as what role they will play in an emergency recovery operation.

It is essential that Emergency Relief Team members have undertaken minimum training requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

3.5 Testing, evaluation and review

Emergency relief and recovery exercises may be conducted in a variety of formats and may test various parts of the Relief and Recovery Plan at different levels of recovery management.

Emergency relief and recovery exercises may be run in conjunction with other emergency management exercises.

The Relief and Recovery Plan will be reviewed after each major incident to ensure that it functions adequately. It will also be updated at least annually to keep information contained within it up-to-date and take into account developments or changes in agencies and the region.

Updating and re-issuing of the Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan is the responsibility of the Municipal Recovery Manager.

A major review on a three-yearly basis that is in line with the statutory audit of a MEMP and Regional Emergency Recovery Plan is undertaken by a panel comprising of VicSES, DHHS and VicPolice.

Refer to the relevant council's *MEMP* for further details on testing emergency management plans.

3.6 Business Continuity

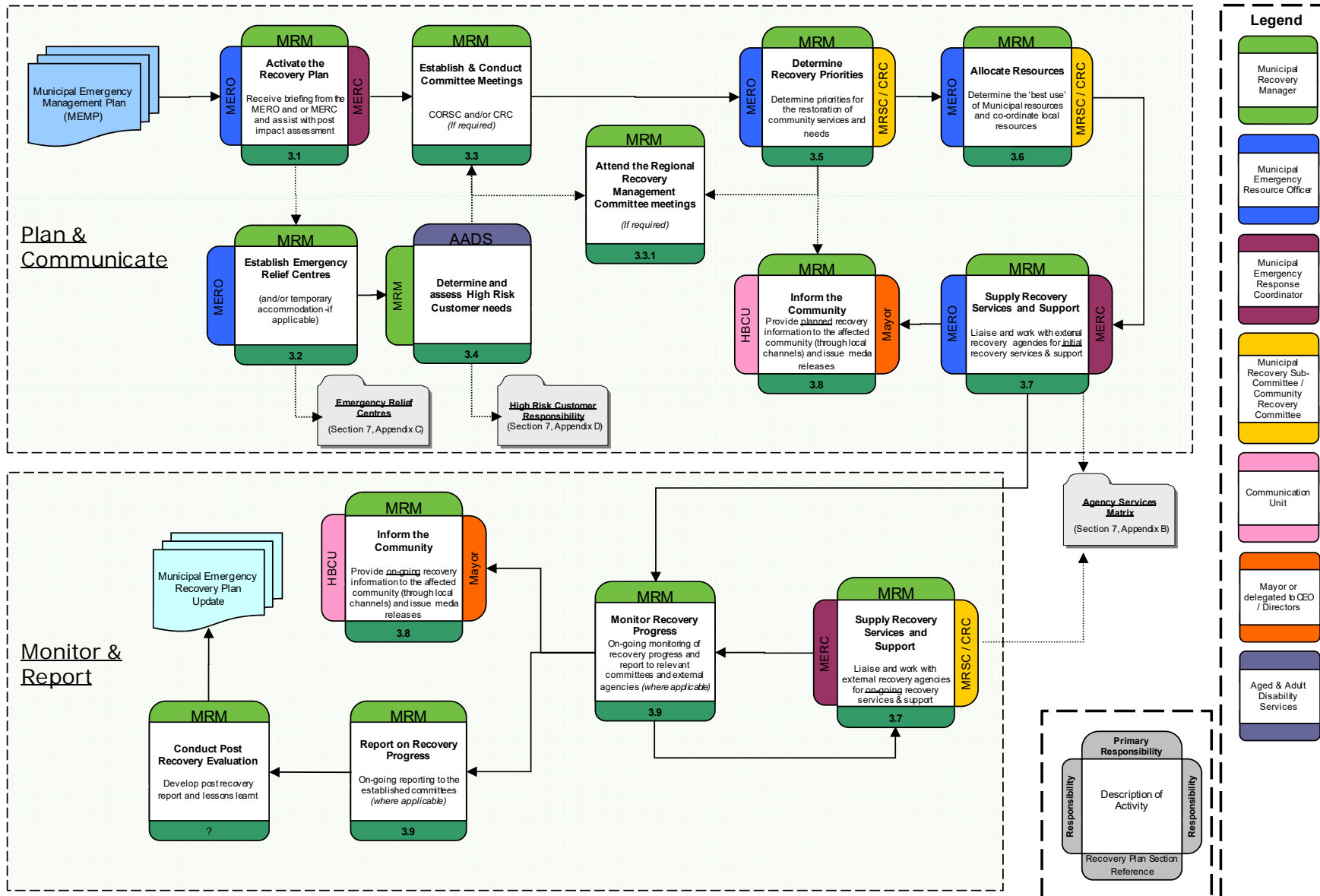
Consideration will be given to how normal council business will be maintained during an emergency recovery operation, particularly when recovery service demands on staff impact on their ability to undertake their normal duties. Past experiences have shown there is an expectation for normal services to be undertaken as well as the recovery tasks. This can lead to work overloads and staff burn-out.

Consideration will be given to business continuity arrangements in the following areas:

- Staff backfilling (either from agencies or other LGAs);
- Agreements with other LGAs to support this strategy;
- Multi-skilling of staff to undertake other council staff duties in their absence;
- Identification of which Council internal roles can be reduced or postponed; and
- Support requirements for staff who are involved in a recovery operation (including critical incident stress management procedures).

4 Recovery process (activation)

The diagram below provides an overview / guideline of the major steps undertaken in the recovery process.



The following information provides further clarification to each of the 'major steps' outlined in the 'overview' document on the previous page.

The Municipal Recovery Manager (who, under the current EM guidelines, is a delegate of the MERO), is to initiate recovery activities as soon as possible, or when required, following an emergency.

The MRM must assess the scale and magnitude of the event and the current available resources when determining Council's recovery effort.

4.1 Activate the relief and recovery plan

Activation of the Relief and Recovery Plan can be initiated in the following ways:

- The MERO is contacted by the DHHS or responsible agency;
- The MRM is contacted by the MERO to begin recovery; or
- The responsible authority/lead agency or DHHS contacts Council, the Environmental Health Department or the MRM directly.

Recovery activities will commence shortly after impact so it is important that the MRM receives a full briefing from the MERO and MERC to gain a clear understanding of the relief and recovery requirements.

The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC), which the MRM is a member of, will conduct the post-impact assessment. A post impact assessment is an appraisal of the extent of damage, disruption and breakdown to the community and its infrastructure as a result of the emergency.

Refer to *Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)* for details regarding the responsibilities of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) and guidelines for the post-impact assessment.

4.2 Establish Emergency Relief Centres

Incident Controllers are primarily responsible for determining the need to activate emergency relief services. The following people have the authority to activate the provision of emergency relief services by affected municipal councils based on an Incident Controller's determination (which may include the activation of emergency relief centres):

- the appointed MERC (Victoria Police officer);
- the relevant MERO (municipal council staff member); and
- a Municipal Recovery Manager (municipal council staff member)

In the event of an emergency occurring and an evacuation area being required, an appropriate Emergency Relief Centre (i.e. a designated location used for the assembly of emergency-affected persons) may have already been nominated and opened by the MERO. If not, the MRM will consult with the MERO and take the lead in arranging the opening of the required ERCs.

The site/s will be conveyed to the MERC who advises Australian Red Cross to arrange the register of evacuees on behalf of the Police. The community will be notified by VicPolice /

Council of the Centres location by various means such as through local radio stations and/or 774 ABC Radio.

The nominated Emergency Relief Centre will be under the authority of Victoria Police, and a Police representative will be in attendance on site. A Council representative and DHHS representative(s) will also be in attendance to assist.

ERCs are normally used for short-term gathering of people to provide refuge and the provision of information. Once the Relief and Recovery Plan has been activated, the ERCs will be coordinated through the recovery process.

Evacuations and registrations responsibility

The decision to evacuate rests with the control agency in conjunction with Police and available expert advice. Consideration must be given to the area that is to be evacuated, the route to be followed, the means of transport and the location to which evacuees will be asked to attend.

Once the decision to evacuate has been made the MERO will be contacted to assist in the implementation of the evacuation. The MRM will coordinate council's role

The MERC and/or MRM will provide advice regarding the most suitable ERC and other resources that may be required (eg. public health, emergency relief considerations or requirements and special needs groups). The physical task of registration at each of the ERCs is the responsibility of Australian Red Cross.

For more detailed information on activating and setting up an ERC, refer to *Appendix C: ERC Standard Operating Guidelines*.

4.3 Establish and conduct Community Recovery Committee meetings

Communities recover best when they are supported to manage their own recovery. The primary method of ensuring and fostering community management of recovery and resilience after an event is through the use of community recovery committees.

The Municipal Recovery Manager has the responsibility to ensure the establishment of community recovery committees as soon as possible after the emergency or prolonged event which may impact the community. Where possible, existing local community representative committees should be used. The community recovery committee is a sub-committee to the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

Community recovery committees help individuals and communities achieve an effective level of functioning. They can coordinate information, resources, and services in support of an affected community, establish priorities and provide information and advice to the affected community and recovery agencies.

The MRM is responsible for establishing this committee. The composition of the committee will vary depending on the affected area. Where there is capacity to assist with recovery services, involvement should also come from local community agencies and private businesses.

| AGENCY | POSITION | AREA OF SPECIALTY |
|---------|--|---------------------------|
| Council | Municipal Recovery Manager | Coordination and resource |
| Council | Community Development / Community Relations personnel | Coordination and resource |
| Council | Councillor | Public consultation |

| AGENCY | POSITION | AREA OF SPECIALTY |
|---|---|---|
| Council | Environmental Health representative | Specialist public health information |
| Department of Health and Human Services | Medical Officer of Health | Specialist medical information |
| Department of Health and Human Services | Office of Housing Representative | Temporary accommodation |
| Emergency Relief Centres | Centre Managers | Provision of material aid and emergency food relief |
| Multicultural Committee | Committee Representative | Representative for ethnic and religious groups |
| Australian Red Cross | Emergency Liaison Officer/ Regional Catering Coordinator | Emergency food and meal preparation and distribution |
| Salvation Army | Divisional Commander | Provision of accommodation support |
| VCC Emergencies Ministry | Area Coordinator | Personal support (psychological first aid and emotional spiritual care) |
| Community Group | Business and Tourism Associations | |
| Various | Community groups as applicable | |

4.4 Determine and assess vulnerable community members

Councils are responsible for the identification of people within the community who are vulnerable community members.

The identification process is coordinated by the Council's aged and family services unit. This information will be primarily derived through the Home & Community Care (HACC) assessment process.

In some emergencies, high risk persons may not necessarily be the aged or disabled, for example in cases of a pandemic, high risk persons could be babies and young children.

The MRM must be informed of the identification of those with 'high needs' or at 'high risk' in order to ensure the appropriate recovery priorities and arrangements are put in place.

Refer to [Section 5.2](#) for more information on managing Vulnerable Community Members.

Refer to *Appendix C: ERC Standard Operating Guidelines* (Task 6.10) for managing vulnerable community members at an ERC.

4.5 Determine recovery priorities

Councils have responsibility for the coordination of recovery activities within the municipal boundaries and DHHS coordinates larger scale events.

The following are activities that may be undertaken to determine priorities and coordinate the provision of recovery services during and/or after an emergency:

- Coordination of local resource provision through Recovery Manager;
- Provision and staffing of recovery/information centre(s);
- Post-impact assessment (gathering and processing of information);

- Survey and determination regarding occupancy of damaged buildings;
- Environmental health management (food, water, sanitation, vector control);
- Monitoring the progress of recovery;
- Provision of information to recovery agencies and government;
- Representation of the interests of the affected community;
- Sponsorship of community recovery committees;
- Supervision and inspection of rebuilding/redevelopment;
- Provision and management of community development services; and
- Provision and/or coordination of volunteer helpers.

Through the convening of the Municipal Recovery Sub-Committee and the Community Recovery Committee as well as determining High Risk Customer needs, the recovery priorities will be identified. It is the primary responsibility of the MRM to ensure these priorities are communicated to internal council departments as well as to relevant agencies who will be assisting in the recovery process.

Recovery priorities will be regularly reviewed, discussed and assessed.

4.6 Allocate resources

Any request for municipal resources should be made by the Incident Controller (or delegate) to supply a service, and/or additional resources will be to the MERC. In partnership with the MERO, the MERC will endeavour to obtain those resources (council owned or sub contracted) through existing municipal arrangements. If unsuccessful, the request will be passed from the MERC to the RERC.

Refer to each Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) for further information.

4.7 Supply recovery services and support

The supply of recovery services and support relies upon effective liaison between appropriate authorities and agencies.

Council will work with the relevant authorities and agencies/service providers to supply and assist with the required services and support.

The following recovery functions must be considered in the immediate and ongoing recovery planning activities:

| Function | Description |
|---|--|
| Accommodation | Provision of emergency / temporary accommodation |
| Aged and Disability Support / High Risk Persons | Plan and coordinate the recovery process for aged and disabled as well as other high risk persons |
| Animal Welfare | Assist/destroy injured animals. Coordinate the disposal of dead animals. Coordinate emergency feed supplies. Identify holding areas and provide cages etc. |
| Catering | Provide food services as required to combat, field and emergency service workers / management / staff |

| Function | Description |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Children's Services | Plan and coordinate the recovery process for children under 12 years of age and provide child care to ERCs |
| Clean-up / Equipment Provision | Plan and coordinate the clean-up process including the provision of temporary resources as required (eg. toilets, generators, earthmoving equipment etc) |
| Communication | Coordinate and provide accurate information to the public and media after an emergency |
| Community Development | Coordinate community events and activities that will assist communities recover from the impacts of an emergency. |
| Donation Coordination | Coordinate the collection and distribution of donated goods, services and money |
| Economic Development | Coordinate and initiate economic development activities to assist local businesses to recover |
| Environment | Assess, advise and repair damage after an event including tree safety, replanting / re-vegetation; erosion prevention and control |
| Environmental Health | Assess, advise and minimize the public health impact of an emergency (eg. safe water, food safety/disposal, septic systems, safe disposal of waste, provision of temporary toilets/facilities |
| ERC Management | Coordinate and staff ERCs. Maintain centre register and support resources |
| Fencing | Coordinate the reconstruction of boundary fencing immediately after an incident in cases where animals need to be contained |
| Financial Assistance | Coordinate the distribution of financial aid to individuals and communities |
| Infrastructure | Rebuild and restore community infrastructure / utilities after an emergency |
| Material Aid | Coordinate distribution of material aid to affected members of the community |
| Personal Support | Coordinate the provision of personal support (psychological first aid and emotional spiritual care) |
| Transport | Assist in transport provision after an incident so that those affected can access relief centre, recovery services, shopping etc |
| Volunteer Coordination | Support and coordinate the work of volunteers and assist other recovery service areas through the provision of volunteers |

For further information regarding each of the above services, refer to [Section 5, Support Arrangements](#).

4.8 Inform the community

General Information through media

Communication with the media in the face of an emergency/disaster must only be conducted by approved senior council personnel who have been accurately briefed by the Media and Public Relations Officer.

They are:

- The Mayor, or the official spokesperson for Council can discuss matters that have been subject to an adopted Council resolution, and deal with television and radio interviews

relating to major issues and enquiries.

- The Chief Executive Officer may, in certain circumstances, be the spokesperson when the issue is operational in nature, or the matter has been delegated by the Mayor.
- General Managers/Directors are authorised to speak with journalists for the primary purpose of providing background and technical information, and on operational matters.

It is important to reiterate that the above personnel **MUST** be briefed by the Media and Public Relations Officer, prior to speaking on behalf of Council in any situation.

Councillors are not authorised to speak directly to the media in regard to an emergency situation. Councillors **MUST** direct all media enquires through the Media and Public Relations Officer.

The Media and Public Relations Officer is governed by an agreed and approved Communications Policy document which provides guidance on informing the community in an emergency situation.

Staff members are not permitted to speak directly with the media. All media enquiries are to be directed to the Media and Public Relations Officer.

In the event of an emergency, all media liaison and communications materials should be coordinated by the Communications Unit.

Emergency Management personnel/roles may be asked to inform the content of the messages but decisions on wording and distribution channels resides with the Communications Unit.

Advisory services

An extensive range of information and advisory services should be made available covering areas such as:

- Assistance measures;
- Availability of financial aid;
- Insurance;
- Legal aid;
- Health and safety;
- Rebuilding;
- Child care; and
- Personal support services.

The Media and Public Relations Officer may also use various methods of disseminating information to the affected community on what services may be available – these must be considered in the context of each individual incident.

A short list may include:

- Print and electronic media advertisements and press releases;
- Newsletters;
- Letterbox drops;
- Public and small group meetings;
- Recovery centres;
- Web sites; and

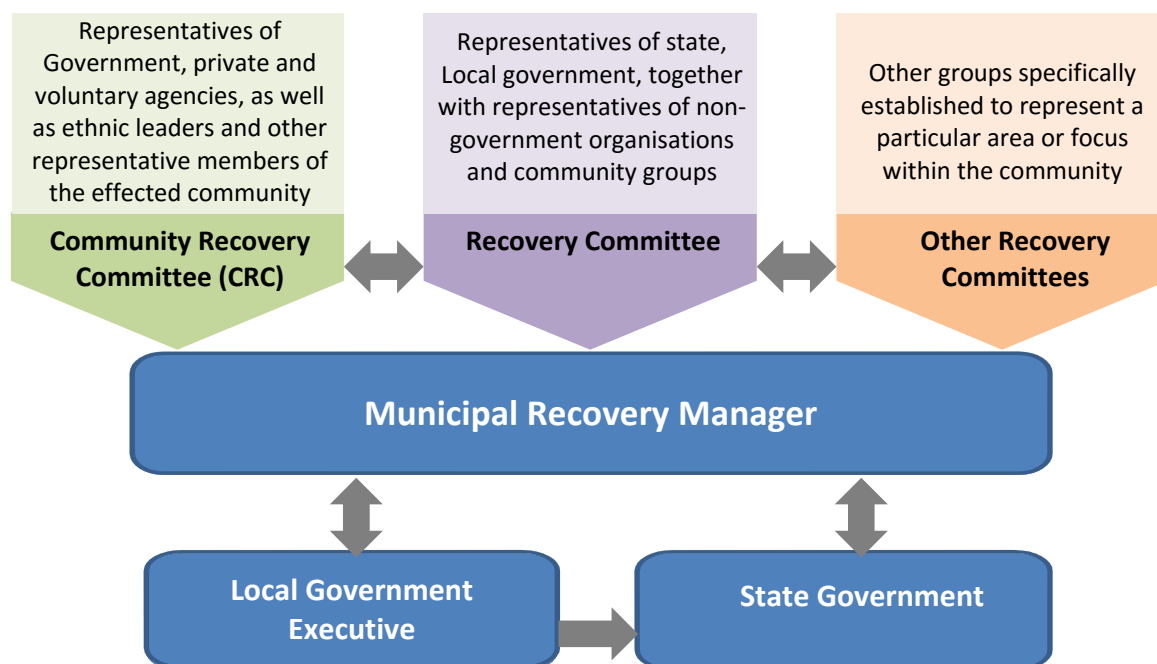
- Outreach visitation programs.

Consideration shall be given to ensure that people with language difficulties, visual and hearing impairments, and mobility problems are not excluded from accessing information. Key agencies in the area of information services are Centrelink, Insurance Council of Australia, Legal Aid Commission and neighbouring Municipalities.

4.9 Monitoring and reporting on recovery

Monitoring and reporting on recovery is conducted through established recovery committees which feedback information to the MRM. The MRM will then report to the State on the progress of recovery.

The following diagram summarises the reporting channels:



4.10 Acquisition of goods and services

Councils and other recovery agencies shall obtain and pay for goods and services through their own supply systems.

The MRM and MERO, with the assistance of DHHS will coordinate the acquisition of support goods/services which cannot be provided by the municipalities or participating agencies. When goods can only be obtained in such a manner, approval for payment from DHHS is required prior to the goods being obtained.

4.11 Conduct post-recovery evaluation

The evaluation of recovery activities and recovery programs following emergency events is essential to maximise lessons learned and identify where improvements can be made. Evaluation may take the form of a formal debrief of operations, or may involve workshops, seminars or applied research into particular areas of activity.

Depending of the type and size of the event, the evaluation may be an informal or formal debrief and must identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local operational response to the recovery needs of the community. The Municipal Recovery Manager must ensure that

the Regional Recovery Coordinator is made aware of the outcome of the evaluation. In addition, Council will endeavour to ensure that the Relief and Recovery Plan is formally reviewed in consultation with stakeholders at least annually and internal training carried out twice per year as part of the corporate training calendar.

5 Support arrangements

Certain types of services may be required during and after an emergency. The delivery of recovery services will be undertaken by agencies nominated in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan, the Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan and/or the Regional Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan.

Management and service provision will be devoted as much as possible to the municipal level, as local government has responsibility for the coordination of recovery activities within their municipal boundaries.

The State Government through the DHHS coordinates larger scale events. State and Regional recovery strategies, services and resources will supplement and complement the municipalities' initiatives rather than replace local endeavours.

Recovery support relies upon effective liaison between appropriate authorities and agencies. Council will work with the relevant authorities and agencies/service providers to supply the required services and support.

The MRM has overall responsibility for determining which Support Agencies will be required and when they will be required (activation). In most cases when an ERC/s has been activated, Support Agencies (where applicable) will be activated and requested to provide support services at the ERC/s.

5.1 Agency services and support

There are usually common categories of needs that are generated after a major emergency. See list of these needs and the associated support available in [Appendix A: Services and agencies for recovery](#).

Appendix A – Services and agencies for recovery also indicates the *primary provider* and the *additional provider* for each of the support areas. This list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive as many agencies, including control agencies may have a support role and a functional service role dependent on the nature of the emergency. In the event that the local resources cannot be provided to meet support tasks needed, the request should be passed onto the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator via the MERC.

5.2 Vulnerable community members

5.2.1 Identification

Councils are responsible for the identification of people within the community who are termed *high needs* or *at high risk* in the event of an emergency either local or municipal.

The identification process will be coordinated by the Aged & Adult Disability Services. This information will be primarily derived through the Home & Community Care (HACC) assessment process.

Supplementary to this, other agencies providing services to vulnerable community members, such as Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS), DHHS – Disability Services or the local hospitals will be responsible for ensuring Council has relevant information regarding vulnerable community members.

Refer to the *Appendix C: ERC Standard Operating Guidelines* (Task 6.10) for managing vulnerable populations at an ERC.

5.2.2 Database information

Information regarding vulnerable community members will be established and maintained by each Council, and will include appropriate information to ensure that clients will not be at increased risk in the event of an emergency. This database of information will be updated in a timely manner and will be stored both in hard copy format (held by the MRM) and in electronic format on each council's Crisisworks site.

This database information will be held in confidence, with only appropriate agencies and staff having access to ensure risk minimisation for client, both individual and groups.

5.2.3 Contingency plan

Where service provision to vulnerable community members is essential or necessary to ensure continuity of care during an emergency, contingency plans will be developed by the appropriate coordinating organisation/agency.

Councils as coordinator and facilitator will be responsible in conjunction with these other agencies for the implementation of appropriately designed contingency plans for vulnerable community members.

5.2.4 Regional responsibility

It is the responsibility of the DHHS to ensure all available information regarding vulnerable community members is readily available to the municipality, to ensure the database of vulnerable community members is accurate at all times, particularly in the event of an emergency.

The DHHS will therefore act as a facilitator to the process and ensure all non-local government based service provision organisations are aware of the relevant Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

5.3 Impact and needs assessment

A community needs assessment is a critical element in providing support and managing a recovery program. Initial needs assessments will include:

- The type, size and effects of the emergency event;
- Community demography;
- Available resources; and
- Pre-existing psychological state of the community.

Often, initial needs assessments are limited by the requirement to establish recovery services quickly and will only give a general although fairly reasonable indicator of needs and services required.

There are many sources of data to determine the needs within a community which can change over time. The most likely sources for gathering needs data include emergency service personnel, police, local government, including social planners and community services staff, ambulance, hospitals, doctors, social workers, mental health workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, recovery workers, welfare workers, recovery agencies, community agencies and, most importantly, affected persons and the local community.

Below is a table with the most common categories of needs that are generated after a major emergency, this is described as an activity. This is not exclusive as needs will depend on the nature and scale of the event and the character of the affected area.

| Accommodation | Aged and Disability Support | Catering |
|---|--|---|
| <p>To assist in the provision of emergency/temporary accommodation in an emergency.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Red Cross (single incidents only) • Salvation Army • Emergency Relief Centres • Motels • Caravan parks • Visitor Information Centres • Real estate agents <p><i>Accommodation register is listed in the appendices (optional)</i></p> | <p>To plan for and coordinate the recovery process for aged and disabled people in the Shire. Identification of other vulnerable groups would be valuable.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged care providers • HACC funded agencies • Barwon Health • Day activity centres • DHHS • Rural access workers • Local GP's • Others as determined | <p>To provide food services as required for Emergency Relief Centres).</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Red Cross • Community Chef • Foodbank Victoria • Lions Club • Other agencies as required |
| Children's Services | Communication | Community Development |
| <p>To plan for and coordinate the recovery process for children under 12 years and to provide Childcare to relief/ recovery centres.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family day care provider • Maternal & Child Health Nurses • Barwon Health • Childcare centres • Preschools • Community nurses • Schools • Outside school hours care providers | <p>To coordinate and provide accurate information to the public and media after an emergency. A dedicated Media Liaison Officer to coordinate information gathering and releases is a significant advantage.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications officers (Municipal Council) • Mayor • Police • Local media • MRM • VicRoads • WICEN | <p>To coordinate community events and activities that will assist communities' recovery from the impacts of an emergency. Employment of a Community Development Office (CDO) may well be a key part of this recovery service.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Community Services (Municipal Council) • Barwon Health • DHHS • Dpt of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development • MRM • VCC Emergencies Ministry • Community group representatives |
| Donations Coordination | Financial Assistance (also falls within economic environment) | Material Aid |
| <p>To coordinate the collection and distribution of donated goods, services and money following an emergency. It is best for the municipality if an external organisation can be recruited to auspice this service area.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Red Cross • Municipal Council • Lions/Service Clubs • Banks | <p>To coordinate the distribution of financial aid to individuals and communities after an emergency. A range of financial grants and subsidies will be offered by various agencies requiring coordination.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHHS • Centrelink • Salvation Army • Australian Red Cross • Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria • Insurance Council of Vic | <p>To coordinate distribution of material aid to affected members of the community following an emergency.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvation Army • Victorian Relief Committee • UnitingCare • Service clubs • Churches • Australian Red Cross • Brotherhood of St Laurence |

| Personal Support | Relief and Recovery Centre Management | Volunteer coordination |
|--|--|--|
| <p>To coordinate the provision of personal support and/or counselling services during and after an emergency. Case management of affected members of the community will be the preferred approach and outreach services will be coordinated from this service area.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCC Emergencies Ministry • Australian Red Cross • DHHS • Education services • SIDS and KIDS • Psychiatric services • Advocacy services as required • St Vincent de Paul | <p>To coordinate and staff relief and recovery centres as established by the MERO and MRM, and liaise with other service coordinators. Regular maintenance of the centre register and support resources is part of the coordinators role.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified municipal centre managers and deputies • SES (relief centre support) • DHHS (recovery centre support) • Australian Red Cross • VCC Emergencies Ministry | <p>To recruit, support and coordinate the work of volunteers after an emergency and to assist other recovery service areas through provision of volunteers as required.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering Victoria (Geelong) • Municipal Council • Community health centre • Service clubs • Others as determined |
| Animal/Stock Welfare | Economic Development | Clean-up/Equipment Provision |
| <p>Assist/destroy injured stock or wildlife. Coordinate disposal of dead stock. Coordinate emergency feed/fodder supplies. Identify holding areas for stock/pets etc. Provide cages/leads etc for animals and relief/recovery centres. Round up escaped stock.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Council • DEDJTR • Wildlife Network • Vets • Landcare Networks • RSPCA • Victorian Farmers Federation • Parks Victoria • Animal aid agencies • Others as determined | <p>To coordinate and initiate economic development activities to assist local businesses to recover following an emergency.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business development officer (Municipal Council) • Tourism development officers (Municipal Council) • Rural Development Victoria • Centrelink • Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria • Rural Counsellors • Local Chamber of Commerce • Great Ocean Road Tourism | <p>To plan for and coordinate the clean-up process after an emergency including the provision of temporary resources as required, eg. toilets, generators, earthmoving equipment, and furniture.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MERO (Municipal Council) • SES • Local contractors (eg. earthmovers) • Service clubs • Neighbouring Municipal Councils • Hire businesses • Municipal Environmental Health Officer (Municipal Council) • CFA • VicRoads • Great Ocean Road Coast Committee |
| Fencing | Environmental Health | Transport |
| <p>To coordinate the reconstruction of boundary fencing of rural properties.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Council • DELWP • Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) • Service clubs • Landcare Network | <p>To assess, advise on and minimise the public health impact of an emergency eg. safe water supply, food safety/disposal, septic systems, safe disposal of waste, provision of temporary toilets/facilities etc.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health Officer (Municipal Council) • DHHS | <p>To assist in transport provision after an event so that those affected can access relief and recovery centres, recovery services, shopping, appointments etc.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MERO (Municipal Council) • Commercial Transport Companies • Taxis/Buses |

| Fencing | Environmental Health | Transport |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local supplies Fencing volunteer groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GP's Barwon Water DELWP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Transport Department of Education Other groups as required |
| Infrastructure | Post Impact Assessment | Environment |
| <p>To rebuild and restore community infrastructure/utilities after an emergency.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MERO (Municipal Council) VicRoads Powercor Barwon Water Telstra Catchment Management Authority Municipal Council Local community V-Line | <p>To coordinate assessment of damage and losses following an emergency. The gathered information will greatly assist the recovery planning and service provision in the recovery process.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DELWP Building Surveyors (Municipal Council) MERO (Municipal Council) Personal support providers Environmental Health Officer (Municipal Council) Arborists (Municipal Council) VicRoads | <p>To assess and advise on and repair damage after an event including tree safety/assessment, replanting, revegetation, erosion prevention and control.</p> <p><i>Service Providers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment officers (Municipal Council) Landcare Groups Parks Victoria DELWP Local nurseries Local contractors Catchment Management Authorities EPA Great Ocean Road Coast Committee Arborists VicRoads (Hazard Assessment) |

Refer also to [Appendix A: Services and agencies for recovery](#)

5.4 Emergency Relief Centres (ERC)

In the event of an emergency occurring and an evacuation area being required, an appropriate Emergency Relief Centre/s (ERC) is to be nominated by the MERO in consultation with the MERC and MRM. The MERC will then advise other agencies.

The community is to be notified of the Centres location by various means such as through local radio stations and 774 ABC Radio.

The nominated Emergency Relief Centre will be under the authority of Victoria Police, and a Police representative will be in attendance on site. Council and DHHS representative(s) will also be in attendance to assist.

Refer to [Appendix B](#) for a list of ERC's and [Appendix C](#) for standard operating guidelines for ERCs

5.5 Social, health and community environment

There is significant evidence that shows social networks have an important effect on the impact of a disaster on people's health. Increased mental health problems; feelings of panic and anxiety, isolation, withdrawal and symptoms of prolonged stress are likely to be evident within the community.

Some people's networks will have been severely debilitated. In addition, anecdotal evidence from the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires suggests that men had been particularly affected by the fires and therefore the role of social support in recovery was critical.

Community based recovery strategies must recognise that different people will be at different stages of grief and trauma and, that decisions about domestic and community reconstruction will take time.

A government review (*Community recovery after the February 2009 Victorian bushfires: a rapid review*”, brokered by the Sax Institute for the Department of Health) identified critical community success factors in community-based recovery strategies.

These include:

- Involving communities in all aspects of decision making;
- Providing resources that give community members the time to participate;
- Consciously creating and building resources for recovery, be they physical, economic, social, psychological or spiritual;
- Recognising different people will be at different stages and that decisions about domestic reconstruction take time;
- Practically acknowledging that strong communities are diverse in their activities, opportunities and people;
- Supporting diverse activities and cultural roles (play can be as important as work);
- Being proactive in particular settings – for example, schools – with evidenced-supported interventions. This is known to create a sense of safety and security; and
- Enabling continuous research and feedback loops to monitor progress and ensure all parts of the community are reached.

5.5.1 Personal support

Definition: The term ‘personal support services’ refers to the process of assisting the diverse, immediate and longer-term personal needs of those people affected by the emergency. These services may be required in the short-term as part of an evacuation process or longer-term through home visits and at recovery centres.

Personal support includes outreach programs, debriefing, counselling and clinical mental health services, information services and general advisory and aid services at the emergency relief centre.

There may be some individuals and groups within the community who have special needs, for instance:

- Young children who need specialised support to help them understand the emergency event and to cope with the stress it has placed on them and their families
- The frail aged and people with disabilities may require special assistance in the physical clean-up and re-establishment of destroyed property.
- People on life support technology will require assistance in ensuring access to essential services such as power, gas and water.

Personal support services are most often provided on a one-to-one basis and comprise the full range of immediate needs following the provision of shelter, food and clothing.

The range of services that may be provided at an Emergency Relief Centre include:

- Information – (eg. explain what’s happened, the services available; and what plans are in place);

- Practical assistance and advice;
- Comfort and reception;
- Referral to other agencies;
- Reassurance and security;
- Monitoring effects of the emergency on children and time away for families;
- Provide child-minding;
- Provision of transport;
- Advocacy, legal aid, insurance information / service points;
- Holding meetings/information distribution forums;
- Interpreters and translated information; and
- Tracing of relatives and loved ones.

Personal support volunteers may be provided by DHHS, Australian Red Cross, VCC Emergencies Ministry and Salvation Army. Council will also work towards facilitating personal support training for Council staff and local community organisations.

5.5.2 Catering

Emergency catering is provided for evacuees and agency staff working at the Centre.

Requests for catering placed with the MERO will be directed to either the Salvation Army for field operations or the Australian Red Cross or nominated local service providers for Emergency Relief Centre services when within the Shire boundary.

Initially emergency catering (i.e. light refreshments) can be provided by local service providers. Liaise with EHO regarding suitable premises.

Should the emergency extend beyond Council boundaries, or increase in duration then the Australian Red Cross Regional Catering Coordinator should be notified as soon as possible and put on standby for any requests.

As part of Public Health sub-Plan, Council's EHO will form and maintain relationships with local catering coordinators, to work towards mutual expectations for food safety.

In conjunction with staff responsible for relief/recovery centres, adequate tables, chairs, cutlery, crockery, rubbish bins and liners, hand washing facilities, urns and cooking utensils are available. An estimate number of people including children and people with special dietary requirements is needed.

Where possible make every effort to use locally available resources for the preparation and distribution of meals.

5.5.3 Accommodation

Usually, most people make their own accommodation arrangements during an emergency. However, others may need immediate assistance and some may require extensive support over an extended period. Following are the short and long term accommodation arrangements.

Short term (up to 48 hours)

Emergency accommodation is the provision of short term shelter provided at emergency relief centres. Overall coordination of emergency accommodation rests with Victoria Police, supported by local Government or VICSES.

A number of council venues have been identified by Council and approved by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) (refer to [Appendix B: Emergency Relief Centres](#)), but location should be assessed depending on the scale and location of the emergency.

Requests from the MERC to open an Emergency Relief Centre shall be actioned by the Municipal Recovery Manager (or their delegate) who will obtain the Manual and necessary keys, contact relevant personnel and equipment prior to attending the centre.

Temporary long term

In the provision of longer term temporary accommodation the matter may be referred to DHHS, who can coordinate temporary accommodation through the Office of Housing, or Australian Red Cross and possibly local accommodation providers. A list of registered prescribed accommodation premises can be obtained from the Public Health Services Unit.

When making accommodation arrangements it is important that the service is individualised and the following points considered:

- Many displaced persons prefer to remain at their home site, or at least in their neighbourhood;
- Where temporary relocation is necessary, individual and family needs should be taken into account;
- Any disruption to work, school or other social or domestic routines should be minimised;
- Temporary arrangements should be of sufficient standard to be suitable until re-establishment is possible;
- Consideration should be made for the length of time required for temporary arrangements;
- When temporary accommodation arrangements are made, they should allow for smooth transition to permanent accommodation at the earliest possible time; and
- Where items such as caravans, generators and water pumps need to be purchased or hired, or motels or bed and breakfasts needed, local businesses should be used whenever possible.

5.5.4 Financial assistance

DHHS administers a range of personal hardship grants where a principal place of residence has been affected by a disaster or emergency or where an evacuation has been required.

People whose homes have been destroyed may require assistance with re-establishment. Even if fully insured, they may need access to information from insurance companies or help in dealing with insurance companies. The Insurance Disaster Response Organisation will coordinate an efficient industry response to the disaster.

The following information is a summary only and further information should be reviewed from the DHHS website at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/emergencies-and-preparedness/emergency-recovery>.

Personal Hardship Grants

This is a program designed to assist people in urgent need directly after the emergency has occurred and also assist those less financially fortunate with re-establishment costs.

Emergency Grant

Up to \$900 per family or household may be available. This is assessed on the basis of need, immediate and urgent accommodation requirements, food and personal needs, all of which cannot be met from the applicant's own resources.

Temporary Living Expenses Grant

This is income tested and repayable if insurance or compensation is provided. The grant aims to help meet temporary living expenses beyond normal day to day expenses where the principal place of residence is not accessible or is uninhabitable and costs cannot be met from the applicant's own resources.

Re-establishment Grants

Affected individuals or families who meet the established income tests limits and who, without assistance, would suffer personal hardship and distress and cannot meet their needs from their own resources.

Other forms of financial assistance may be available such as:

- Income security: Centrelink provides assistance to people affected by an emergency where it impacts upon their ability to earn an income.
- Low interest loans: These may be made available to assist affected property holders, non-government organisations, and local businesses.
- Distribution of public appeals: During some emergencies, the public and corporations donate money for affected communities. Appeals may be established with aid agencies i.e. Salvation Army, Australian Red Cross and St. Vincent de Paul. Local Banks such as Bendigo Bank are important for assisting with the collection and secure holding of donated money.
- Waiving fees: Local Government may waive tipping and building permit fees to assist affected people clear debris and undertake the re-building process.

Insurance

People whose homes have been destroyed may require assistance with re-establishment. Even if fully insured, they may need access to information from insurance companies or help in dealing with insurance companies. The Insurance Disaster Response Organisation will coordinate an efficient industry response to the disaster.

Where people are not insured or are under-insured and do not have the resources to restore their losses, the following measures may be considered;

- Payment of personal hardship grants;
- Distribution of material aid;
- Distribution of financial appeal funds; and
- Availability of concessional loans.

Considerations for Council

- Council staff may be required to support DHHS in the administering of the grants, basic training and administrative skills will be required;
- The Grant application process can be difficult to those staff not used to being in confrontational circumstances i.e. telling affected persons they are not eligible for grants;
- People duplicating grant applications to receive more financial assistance; and
- Information dissemination: to inform those affected persons of the range of services offered by Government and community organisations regarding personal hardship grants, social security payments, low interest loans, compensation, insurance payments etc.

5.5.5 Material aid / needs

Material Aid needs typically consists of clothing, bedding, toiletries, essential furniture, cooking equipment and toys. Consideration shall be given to specialised requirements for the care of infants, older people or people with disabilities.

When temporary accommodation is obtained, further material aid may be required, either on loan or permanently or through the Temporary Living Expenses Grant and the Re-Establishment Grant. Needs may include: white goods, furniture, soft furnishings, tools, kitchen utensils and home wares.

The Salvation Army is responsible for the coordination of material aid.

In conjunction with the MRM, estimate the likely requirements for aid. Sometimes, specialised goods for the care of infants, older people or people with disabilities are required

In conjunction with the Salvation Army, supporting organisations and local community groups, organise for the collection, transport, storage and distribution of material goods. A designated venue away from the ERC may need to be used, and a range of alternatives should be considered including utilising existing opportunity shops, or more preferably the use of vouchers.

5.5.6 Donated goods

Goods of all descriptions will be donated, but the need for donated goods should not be actively sought or advertised. Massive resources are required to store, sort and usually discard unwanted donated goods. Instead communications from federal, state and local government will encourage the community to donate monies to Appeal Funds when applicable.

5.5.7 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) considerations

Some CALD groups may have special requirements or they may have had traumatic experiences which could influence the affect the emergency has on them. Throughout the recovery process, particularly at emergency relief centres, the needs of CALD communities must be considered. It should also be recognised that due to the nature of emergency situations it may not be possible to accommodate all requirements.

Considerations may include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Use of interpreters; | meals (eg. Ramadan, Passover, Orthodox fasting); |
| • Multilingual signs; | |
| • Translated material; | • Clothing requirements; |
| • Liaison with community organisations for specific requirements; | • Use of ethnic radio and television to convey messages; |
| • Dietary requirements, including but not limited to halal and kosher; | • Personal support requirements due to previous experiences; and |
| • Religious practices, this may include a dedicated prayer room at a relief centre and affect diet and times of | • Specific areas for different genders. |

5.5.8 Public Health

Council's environmental health units address local arrangements for public health emergency management such as the following risk areas:

- Food safety (including donated food);
- Safe and adequate water supply;
- Infectious disease control;
- Emergency shelter and accommodation;
- Siting and layout of campsites;
- Waste collection and disposal;
- Wastewater management;
- Emergency toilets and ablution facilities;
- Vermin and vector control;
- Disposal of dead stock and other animals; and
- Pollution of water, land and air.

5.6 Animal welfare

In the event where animals are affected during and/or after an emergency, the organisations listed in [Appendix A: Services and agencies for recovery](#) should be contacted to provide assistance with animal welfare.

Assistance required may be to:

- Destroy injured animals;
- Coordinate the disposal of dead animals;
- Coordinate emergency feed supplies;
- Identify holding areas and provide cages;
- Provide treatment for injured animals; and
- Reunite them with their owners.

5.7 Built environment

It is important to ensure that assets of the community damaged or destroyed during an emergency are re-established or replaced as soon as possible after the emergency.

Infrastructure assists individuals and communities in the management of their daily lives, but also forms an important part of community identity. Some public buildings have an important symbolic role, and their loss can have a severe negative impact on community morale.

It is essential that the appointed Recovery Committee engage with the affected community to understand the community's restoration priorities, and to keep the community informed of recovery progress.

Built environment impacts include, but are not limited to:

- Electricity;
- Gas;
- Water;
- Telecommunications;
- Transport;
- Roads; and
- Other essential services (such as school, hospitals, emergency services, banking facilities)

and shops).

5.7.1 Critical infrastructure

Restoration of critical infrastructure must be undertaken with an awareness of the needs of vulnerable individuals and communities.

Buildings, both private and public, and other infrastructure is an integral part of a community's identity. Public buildings in particular, may have a symbolic 'anchoring' role and their loss can impact negatively on a community's collective morale.

5.7.2 Essential services

Essential services such as electricity, gas, water, sewerage, and telecommunications will also need to be examined. Priority should be given to these facilities to ensure that the affected community can begin to function normally.

Council's EHO can assist with identifying the suitability of occupancy of properties serviced by septic systems.

5.7.3 Properties

Changes to the Planning legislation may be required to make the approval process quicker. This was such the case following the 2009 bushfires where the adoption of the Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) into the State building regulations required standards of accreditation for building materials to meet the relevant BAL levels, particularly the higher 'FZ' BALs. This caused delays in the issuing of building permits for dwellings.

A high priority for the Community Recovery Committees and other community support groups is to facilitate the return to properties through advocating for more suitable temporary accommodation options onsite and ensuring residents are kept informed and engaged in community events and support mechanisms.

All available transport and engineering resources within the municipality should be identified. This will include specialist and technical advice and deployment of those resources.

All requests for transport and engineering should be directed to the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator, who will request them through the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer.

Municipal resources should be used in the first instance or through alternate arrangements prior to engaging private contractors.

Council will facilitate clean-up activities only on council land. The recovery support actions for 'built environment' should be undertaken and coordinated through an established local or regionally developed group.

Key Stakeholders may include (but not be limited to):

- Community Recovery Committees;
- Council;
- Established Recovery and Reconstruction groups;
- Building Commission;
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR);
- Utilities – Telstra;

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD);
- VicRoads; and
- Sport and Recreation Victoria.

This established group would assist to:

- Facilitate timely reconstruction of private and public assets;
- Promote appropriate and sustainable forms of development; and
- Facilitate and support people returning to their property.

5.8 Natural Environment

Emergency events (particularly bushfires) can have had a significant impact on the natural environment. These impacts include, but are not limited to

- Air quality;
- Water quality (including catchment management);
- Land degradation and contamination; and
- Natural environment (including public lands and National Parks).

Landholders in the region have always had a strong relationship with the land. Natural recovery of the land can be just as important to the health and wellbeing of people as it is to the environment.

Landcare groups are well established in the area and can provide social interaction and community connectedness as well as environmental improvements. As the land takes time to recover, land managers may feel overwhelmed by the amount of work they may be faced with.

An important element of recovery is education and support for land managers to help prioritise works and learn practical steps that they can implement to use their time and any funding most efficiently.

Councils generally have strong representation of community groups dedicated to the environment and where possible they should be utilised for recovery projects.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Replacement of vegetation and shelter;
- Injured native fauna;
- Waterway protection;
- Weed and vermin control;
- Waste management; and
- Erosion control.

A *Natural Environment Recovery Working Group* may be established to coordinate natural environment recovery programs across both public and private land.

Key Stakeholders may include (but not be limited to):

- Community Recovery Committees;

- Landholders;
- Council;
- Established Recovery and Reconstruction groups;
- Landcare Groups;
- Environmental action groups;
- Water Authorities;
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP);
- VicRoads; and
- Sport and Recreation Victoria.

This group would assist to:

- Coordinate activities and support programs relating to natural environment recovery;
- Make recommendations to Council, regional committees and taskforces on natural environment recovery issues from a community perspective;
- Advocate for and act as a steering committee for funding of local environment projects;
- Develop and implement coordinated environment recovery programs on priority issues;
- Identify needs and coordinate information sessions, workshops and forums on relevant topics;
- Share and report relevant information from regional meetings and make recommendations on issues/ideas to be raised at regional meetings; and
- Provide consistent messages across Council and the community on natural environment recovery processes.

This working group should also maintain key links with any established 'regional' environment working groups.

5.9 Economic Environment

The economic impact of an emergency is often hidden, and may need a detailed assessment to ascertain both immediate and long-term effects.

The objective is to ensure that economic wellbeing is re-established and that financial hardships for the affected community are lessened.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Tourism industry;
- Small business; and
- Primary producers.

Emergencies may damage the economic base of a community through destruction of industries, places of employment, including the tourist industry and farms. This is a long term program that is concerned with ensuring that farms and small businesses receive assistance (such as concessional loans and grants) to stimulate their recovery. It is also concerned, broadly, with the recovery of the affected area's economic and commercial infrastructure.

It is also important that local businesses and suppliers are used during the recovery process as it has a positive impact on the economic recovery of the local community.

The recovery actions should be undertaken and coordinated through an established local or regionally developed 'economic' group. Key Stakeholders may include (but not be limited to):

- Regional Development Victoria;
- Office of the Victorian Small Business Commissioner;
- Small Business Mentoring Service;
- Local tourism associations;
- Agribusiness associations (regional);
- Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria;
- Council staff

This group should be established to assist with:

- Consultation and stakeholder engagement, develop knowledge and information systems that identify the medium to long term recovery needs of businesses affected by the event;
- Developing and coordinating local, regional and metropolitan programs and events that will assist the recovery of businesses affected by the event;
- Informing and influencing government and associated agencies in relation to programs and funding needs to aid business recovery;
- Publicising and facilitating access to support services that will assist the recovery of businesses affected by the event; and
- Monitoring and reporting to stakeholders and Government on the outcomes of business recovery programs.

Council will maintain involvement throughout the 'economic' recovery process and will:

- Develop an Economic Strategy;
- Ensure local contractors are used in the recovery process and, if unable, develop strategies to support local contractors;
- Conduct local network meetings;
- Supply Business Support Officer's to provide independent business development advice to businesses impacted by the event; and
- Establish a small business mentoring service to businesses either directly or indirectly impacted.

5.10 Resources

5.10.1 Municipal resources

Municipalities have a responsibility to plan for and supply municipal resources from within the municipal area in the event of an emergency, in accordance with the *Emergency Management Act 1986*, Part 4 – Responsibilities of Municipal Councils.

If Council is unable to supply, then it is passed through the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO) to the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC).

Control Agencies or local support agencies must use resources of their own agency first.

5.10.2 Municipal resource sharing

Emergencies sometimes require councils to source additional resources to ensure that the affected community is restored to normal function as efficiently as possible. Some emergency response agencies have agreements for mutual aid with kindred organisations that allows them to plan appropriately for responding to large scale or complex emergencies.

Council emergency management resources are generally sourced from within the municipal boundaries where the emergency occurs, which can impact significantly on the resources of the responsible council, particularly for larger or more complex emergencies.

Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Corangamite Shire have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure mutual aid agreements are in place to respond to an emergency event. The purpose of this MOU is to:

- Formalise the working relationship for the operational arrangements in the delivery of emergency relief services within the municipal areas covered by the parties.
- Outline the functional commitment of the parties in the event of a major emergency affecting one or more Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration Councils.
- Enhance the capability and capacity of the parties by enabling Councils to request extra resources for the provision of relief services, to the maximum extent practicable, mindful of differing Council capacities to respond.

For more information and specific details on resource sharing, refer to the each Council's MEMP.

5.10.3 Regional resources

If it becomes apparent that an emergency will exceed the capacity of a municipality to perform emergency relief or recovery functions, the municipal council may request the relevant Regional Recovery Coordinator (DHHS) to coordinate relief or recovery at the regional level. If the request cannot be supported at the regional level, the request passes through the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator (RERC) to State level.

5.10.4 State resources

Supply of resources from other regions, including inter-agency and inter-government liaison and coordination; facilitation, support and resourcing of operations; and policy issues relating to recovery. If unable to supply, passes through the State Coordinator to Emergency Management Australia, Canberra.

5.10.5 Commonwealth resources

Supply from Commonwealth Agencies or other states of resources including financial assistance through the Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements (NDRA).

5.10.6 Community organisations resources

Many community organisations will have resources that can be of use in an emergency. It is the responsibility of Council to provide the management system to coordinate offers of assistance from these organisations.

A register of contact details of organisations able to assist will be maintained by the municipality.

5.10.7 Resource supplementation

Resource Supplementation at municipal level occurs when functional services or control authorities exhaust their own avenues of supply and there is a requirement for continued supply.

Functional Service agencies supplying a service and requiring additional resources will put their request to the MERO. The control and support agencies will make their request through the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator.

The MERO will endeavour to obtain those resources through existing municipal arrangements. If unsuccessful, the request will be passed through the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator to the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator. The DHHS Regional Headquarters will action the request on behalf of the Regional Emergency Response Coordinator.

5.10.8 Volunteers

Emergencies may provoke a desire by community members to assist the affected community. The use of volunteers to deliver services is often employed in these situations.

Volunteers are required to be trained to have extensive knowledge and/or experience in the tasks they are to carry out. There may also be unsolicited offers of voluntary support.

Using volunteers can be an effective way of getting the community to manage its recovery however; there are a number of issues that need to be considered:

- Use of volunteers from outside the affected area may cause resentment within the affected area. Volunteering aids community strengthening and the recovery process;
- Volunteers may not be appropriate for tasks;
- Volunteers may not be appropriately skilled;
- Managers need to be aware of the motivation of volunteers which may be to deflect personal grief;
- Insurance and duty of care needs to be clarified to ensure volunteers are fully covered;
- The process for recording offers of voluntary support and allocating volunteers needs to be clear;
- Unsolicited volunteers will call many different organisations with their offer of support, causing more work for each organisation;
- Consistent messages must be provided to the community about volunteering;
- If a volunteer has not heard from an organisation, they may become frustrated; and
- Offers of voluntary support need to be acknowledged, both in the initial stages and after the conclusion of recovery activities.

6 Appendices

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