Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership Model

February 2022

Foreword

Victorian Emergency Management Commissioner

In Victoria we recognise that building safer and more resilient communities is a shared responsibility for all Victorians, not just our emergency services sector. This requires community involvement and engagement across all emergency phases including preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.

Victoria has one of the most diverse communities in the world. Close to half of all Victorians were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas, more than a quarter speak a language other than English at home, and more than 130 faiths are followed.

Therefore, for safer and more resilient communities in Victoria, sustainable and collaborative partnerships are required between multicultural communities and the emergency services sector.

The Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership model provides a unique opportunity to bring together multicultural leaders and emergency services organisations to establish and strengthen relationships. The model can assist our sector to better understand the strengths of diverse community networks that can be drawn upon and can improve communities' understanding of how to better prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

This partnership will facilitate two-way knowledge sharing with the potential to increase the sector's capability and capacity to effectively engage with the diverse communities that make up Victoria, and to improve outcomes from emergencies.

I look forward to contributing to and learning from this partnership.

Andrew Crisp, Emergency Management Commissioner

Introduction

Community leaders are a key asset and driver of preparedness and response to emergencies in migrant and refugee communities, and have played a critical role in keeping communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commencing late July 2021, representatives from the Multicultural Community Advisory Group and Emergency Management Working Group came together to develop effective and ongoing engagement between multicultural communities and Emergency Management organisations. This work has culminated in the establishment of the Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership (MEMP).

About this document

This document guides how the Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership will progress the MEMP's ongoing aims and expectations for MEMP's members.

Acknowledgment

This initiative is supported by the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) who have partnered to deliver the Multicultural Emergency Resilience Project, funded by the Victorian Department of Health (DH).

Picture credit: Emergency Management Victoria Community Resilience Framework

Current membership

Leaders and connectors representing multicultural communities and organisations

- Iraqi communities
- Muslim Womens support group
- Hazara Community of Bendigo Association
- Chinese Community Council of Australia
- Indian communities
- Multicultural communities in the Geelong area
- Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District
- Pacifika communities (regional Victoria)
- Pacifika communities (metropolitan Melbourne)
- Somali communities
- 92 graduates of the 2021 Masterclasses

The MEMP is Co-Chaired by one member from multicultural communities and one member from emergency management organisations.

VCOSS and ECCV provide project advice and secretariat services for the MEMP.

Representatives from Emergency Management organisations

- Ambulance Victoria
- Australian Red Cross
- Country Fire Authority
- Department of Health, Victoria
- Emergency Management Victoria
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Fire Rescue Victoria
- Life Saving Victoria
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Victorian Council of Churches Emergency Ministry
- Victorian Council of Social Service
- Victoria Police
- Victorian State Emergency Service

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Our Vision
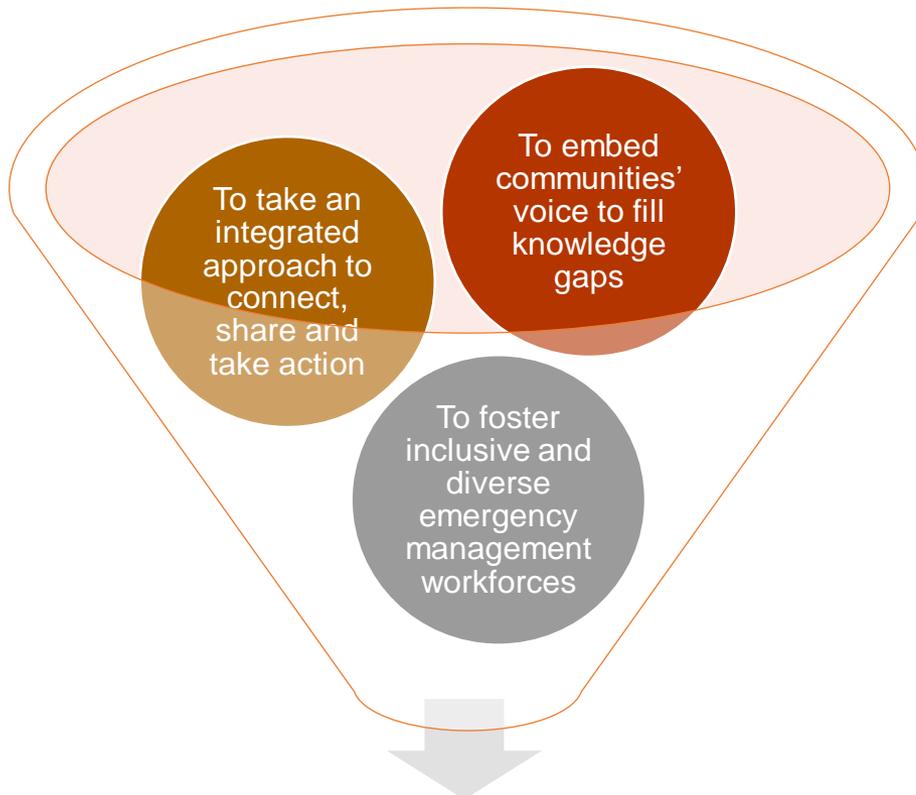
Safer, connected and resilient communities

Our Values

We are…

- community-led

- culturally safe

- inclusive and respectful

- supportive

- continuously improving

- collaborative.

Picture credit: African Australian Community Taskforce, as posted on Twitter, 9 December 2018

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Our Purpose

To take an integrated approach to connect, share and take action

To embed communities' voice to fill knowledge gaps

To foster inclusive and diverse emergency management workforces

…enabling communities to better manage stresses and shocks, including emergencies, through trusted, diverse and connected people.

Our Objectives

- To provide greater **cultural safety** and **cultural responsiveness** for all who participate in and with emergency management organisations

- To increase **mutual understanding and trust** between multicultural communities and emergency management organisations

- To strengthen **community resilience** by enabling communities to prepare for, cope with and recover from the impacts of emergencies

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How we work

We will take a strengths-based approach to community resilience building by:

- listening to and learning from each other with mutual respect

- valuing and building on the strengths of our diverse cultural and language backgrounds

- providing a culturally safe platform to work and connect with others

- celebrating our successes, while learning from challenges

- as leaders, supporting our own self-care and each other's emotional wellbeing

- actively addressing prejudice through our alliance, being conscious of the impacts of structural and systemic bias and racism in our work

- focusing on outcomes.

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Our Priorities

Working together we will:

- Build relationships and multiple **channels of communication**

- Strengthen and equip community leaders with **knowledge about local emergency management** processes and tools, exploring together to allow for different approaches

- Engage **community leaders** in emergency management **planning** at the community level for **relevant** and **tailored** local approaches to emergencies

- Develop **simple, accurate and relevant information** to disseminate in culturally safe and community-specific ways

- Seek opportunities and develop strategic alliances that **build cultural safety and inclusion** in emergency management organisations

- Support the adaptation of **recruitment and induction processes** that increase **workforce diversity** in the regions and at grass roots levels

Roadmap overview

Priority	Short-term actions		Longer term actions
i. Stronger relationships at the local level	**Explore concept of resilience between local partnership to ensure it includes both multicultural and EM perspectives** ⊙ ▶ Partnership	**Identify and describe simple relationship building tool or process** ⊙ ▶ Partnership	**Undertake all activities in partnership at grass roots level will strengthen relationships and increase understanding** ⊙ ▶ Partnership
	Share positive examples of relationship building at the local level to learn from and possibly replicate (story-telling / community reflections) ⊙ ▶ EM, Community		**Extend existing networks within regions to strengthen local connections between communities and EM organisations** ⊙ ▶ Partnership
ii. Stronger understanding of local community strengths and needs	**Develop interactive map of community strengths, share and discuss with local partners** ⊙ ▶ Community	**Develop interactive map of harder to reach groups within community, share and discuss with local partners** ⊙ ▶ Community	**Map highest emergency risks for local area and develop EM plan for community (e.g. if evacuation, what to take, where to go)** ⊙ ▶ Partnership and local government
	Undertake needs analysis of services required to support harder to reach groups in context of community strengths ⊙ ▶ Partnership	**Document lessons learned from pandemic experience** ⊙ ▶ Partnership	**Share lessons, plan and develop processes for future emergencies at local, regional and state levels** ⊙ ▶ Partnership and local government

Responsible for **leading** delivery ▶ Community, EM, Partnership, Local Government

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Roadmap overview

Priority	Short-term actions		Longer term actions	
iii. Develop relevant and tailored emergency plans and processes	Communicate available grants with multicultural communities and organisations to build capacity for community-led initiatives — ▶ EM	Develop culturally suitable emergency pack lists **and** Plan for displacement of communities — ▶ Community	Work with funding bodies to increase accessibility for more community groups to benefit from grants (by reducing red tape) — ▶ Partnership	Include basic emergency information in settlement induction or citizenship test — ▶ Partnership
	Provide support for grant writing / access to grant writing training — ▶ EM	Develop contact list to enable community leaders to connect with harder to reach people in their community — ▶ Community	Provide accessible training for local leaders to share with community (e.g. an EM introductory course) — ▶ EM	
iv. Community to have access to simple accurate information	Develop pocket guide that maps emergency stakeholders tailored for multicultural communities — ▶ Partnership	Identify one trusted central body, such as ECCV, for communication around emergencies — ▶ Partnership	Work with Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee re community needs — ▶ EM	
	Develop contact lists of emergency services available / preferred community communication channels (e.g. social media) for community leaders — ▶ Partnership			

Responsible for **leading** delivery ▶ Community, EM, Partnership, Local Government

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Roadmap overview

Priority	Short-term actions		Longer term actions	

v. Increased cultural safety and inclusion within EM organisations

Attend cultural safety training to learn what communities mean when talking about cultural safety
▶ EM

Build trust through communication and sharing information e.g. when locally relevant EM training is available
▶ Partnership

Identify suitable training/resources that can be rolled out and provide consistency across the sector
▶ Partnership

Develop a standard so it doesn't become tokenistic – e.g. Reconciliation Action Plans, Rainbow Tick etc
▶ Partnership

When working together, set initial expectations regarding respect and discuss what is acceptable as a group
▶ Partnership

Use resources that already exist e.g. 'How to become an ally' anti-racism guide
▶ EM

Develop a roadmap / resource for EM organisations
▶ Partnership

Be a consultative group for EM organisations to test and develop their diversity and inclusion
▶ Partnership

Support EM organisations in community centred / human centred design to facilitate capability uplift
▶ Partnership

To capture learnings from pandemic to inform and strengthen how emergency management processes operate
▶ Partnership

vi. Adapt recruitment and induction processes to increase workforce diversity

Placeholder
▶ Partnership

Placeholder
▶ Partnership

Placeholder
▶ EM

To be informed by learnings from Priority V. to ensure more than a multicultural recruitment campaign

Responsible for **leading** delivery ▶ Community, EM, Partnership

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Definitions

Cultural safety[1] - creating a space where everyone can examine their own cultural identities and attitudes and be open-minded and flexible in attitudes towards people from cultures that differ to their own. It requires everyone to understand that their own values or practices are not always or only the best way to solve problems.

Disaster[2] - A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale leading to human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.

Emergency[2] - An event, actual or imminent, which endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and which requires a significant and coordinated response. Emergency is sometimes used interchangeably with the term disaster.

Preparedness[2] - The knowledge and capacities developed to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters.

Response[2] - Actions taken directly before, during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic needs of people affected.

Relief[2] - The provision of immediate shelter, life support and human needs of persons affected by, or responding to, an emergency. It includes the establishment, management and provision of services to emergency relief centres.

Recovery[2] - The coordinated process of supporting emergency-affected communities in restoring emotional, social, economic and physical well-being and the reconstruction of infrastructure.

[1] *Definition adapted from SafeWork NSW*

[2] *Definition adapted from Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary*