

State Emergency Recovery Arrangements

Part 4: Emergency Management Manual Victoria

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4.1 Introduction

The State Emergency Recovery Arrangements (the Arrangements) are the agreed statewide arrangements that are jointly owned by all levels of government, together with the agencies and organisations that participate in supporting the recovery of people affected by emergencies.

Emergencies of various scales frequently occur in Victoria. These emergencies vary greatly in terms of the size of the event, the geographic area affected, the nature of the hazard that causes the emergency, and the impacts on the community.

The Arrangements have been developed in accordance with the directions of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and form part of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*. They have been developed to ensure adequate arrangements are in place to assist those who are affected by emergencies.

The Arrangements in conjunction with the State Emergency Response Arrangements set the strategic framework within which emergency management planning and operations are undertaken in Victoria. The Arrangements are part of a broader framework and should read in conjunction with the other parts of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)*.

Context of Recovery in Victoria

In reading these Arrangements, it is essential to have an appreciation of the assumptions and accepted understandings that underpin them. These assumptions and accepted understandings are:

- **Resilience of individuals and communities is respected**

Recovery services and programs must acknowledge the inherent resilience that affected individuals and communities display. Individuals, when possessing information about the situation and available services, are able to make informed choices about their recovery. Communities, when supported with information and resources, are able to support and manage their own recovery.

- **Recovery is part of emergency management**

Recovery is an integral component of the arrangements that support the whole of emergency management activity in Victoria. These arrangements are documented in other places within the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*.

- **Levels of recovery operations**

Recovery operates at multiple levels in the Victorian arrangements. In order to ensure the success of the Arrangements, it is vital that all agencies and organisations involved in management, coordination or service delivery undertake these activities in a cooperative and collaborative manner, within the agreed framework. Coordination and communication both at and between the various levels of operation will assist in ensuring the success of recovery activities for the affected community.

- **Roles of organisations and agencies**

Recovery is not the exclusive domain of any single agency. All agencies and organisations willing to participate have an important role to play. This recognises that recovery must be a whole-of-government and a whole-of-community process. The agreed roles and responsibilities of agencies under these arrangements is contained in Part 7 of the EMMV.

- **Affected community involvement**

Recovery requires the active involvement of the affected community. It is an accepted principle of recovery that the active involvement of the affected community is essential for its success. All recovery agencies should seek to engage with the affected community during the development of plans, and must involve the community in the development of recovery activities following an emergency.

- **Operational plans support arrangements**

All agencies and organisations with agreed roles and responsibilities under the Arrangements must develop internal operational plans that detail the capacity of the agency and strategies that will be employed by the agency to undertake the agreed roles and responsibilities.

- **Response/Recovery interface**

Recovery should begin as soon as possible when an emergency occurs. It is therefore essential to ensure high levels of understanding and cooperation between response coordinators and recovery coordinators at each of the levels of operation. In many instances there will be a “handover” of coordination responsibility from the response coordinator to the recovery coordinator. Appropriate arrangements must be negotiated and documented between coordinators at the levels of operations to ensure this occurs.

It must also be recognised that recovery activities often occur naturally within the affected community. The emergency recovery planning and coordination activities undertaken at state, regional and municipal level are intended to and provide structure for what would otherwise be *ad hoc* assistance to people affected by emergencies.

Authority

The Arrangements have been prepared under the authority of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and amendments.

Section 17 provides for the preparation of a State Emergency Recovery Plan, now known as the State Emergency Recovery Arrangements (the Arrangements).

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, as Coordinator-in-Chief of Emergency Management, appoints a senior government official as State Recovery Coordinator under the *Emergency Management Act 1986* (Sec 17b).

The Department of Human Services has been nominated by the Coordinator-in-chief as the coordination agency for recovery (section 17) and the Secretary of the Department has appointed the Executive Director, Operations as the State Recovery Coordinator.

The Arrangements are prepared by the State Recovery Coordinator in collaboration with the State Emergency Recovery Planning Committee and in consultation with stakeholders from emergency recovery agencies.

The Arrangements have been approved by the State Emergency Recovery Planning Committee and endorsed by the Victoria Emergency Management Council.

Purpose and Scope

Purpose

The purpose of the Arrangements is to:

- Set strategic arrangements for the management of recovery activities in the State of Victoria at a local, regional and state level.
- Provide for the coordination of recovery from statewide emergencies.
- Set out principles and concepts to be used by municipal councils, the Department of Human Services, and agencies in coordinating recovery services to support the recovery of communities from emergencies.
- Provide a framework for the development of supporting plans and standard operating procedures.

Scope

These Arrangements apply to all emergencies, as defined by the *Emergency Management Act 1986* that have an impact on the Victorian community. The principles contained within these arrangements may also be used, at the discretion of the Premier, Coordinator-in-chief of Emergency Management, or State Recovery Coordinator, to support communities affected by events that are not covered by the definition of emergency.

The State Emergency Response Arrangements contain provisions for the planning and management of emergency relief activities to support people affected by emergencies. (Refer Part 8 Appendix 2 of the EMMV for further information)

4.2 Key Concepts of Emergency Recovery Management

This section of the Arrangements describes some of the key concepts of the recovery arrangements so that a common understanding is achieved among participating agencies. It is not a comprehensive list of definitions or a glossary of terms (refer Part 8 of the *EMMV* for full glossary).

Recovery definition

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)

Recovery from emergencies is a developmental process of assisting individuals and communities to manage the re-establishment of those elements of society necessary for their wellbeing.

The process involves cooperation between all levels of government, non-government organisations, community agencies and the private sector in consideration of:

- The emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical wellbeing of individuals and communities
 - The restoration of essential and community infrastructure
 - The rehabilitation of the environment
 - The revitalisation of the economy of the community
- to ensure as far as possible that the wellbeing of a community is increased.

During recovery, governments and communities work together to assist affected individuals and communities to move towards a healthy, safe and functioning environment.

Levels of Recovery Management and Planning

Levels of Recovery Management and Planning refers to the administrative arrangements that are developed to ensure recovery activities are managed at the most appropriate level.

The levels of recovery management under these arrangements are:

- Municipal
- Regional
- State
- National (Australian Government).

Functional Areas of Recovery

There are four key functional areas that require the application of coordination arrangements as part of the recovery process. These functional areas focus on the various needs of a community within the:

- social, health and community environment
- economic environment
- natural environment
- built environment.

Whilst each of these functional areas overlaps considerably, each also has a specialist skill requirement to address issues arising after an emergency.

Each functional area will need internal coordination as well as coordination with the other functional areas.

The responsibility for overall coordination rests with DHS as the coordination agency for recovery (Emergency Management Act, Sec 17a).

Social, Health and Community Environment

Social health, and community impacts refer to the impact that an emergency may have on the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community fabric. This functional area includes individual and community needs including but not limited to:

- temporary accommodation
- material assistance
- financial assistance
- personal support
- health and medical services
- community development.

Recovery planning at municipal, regional and state levels should address each of these aspects of the functional area. Contact Department of Human Services State Emergency Recovery Unit for further advice.

Economic Environment

This area refers to the economic impact that an emergency may have on individuals and communities in an affected geographical area. 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 for this functional area of operations is to ensure that economic wellbeing is re-established and that financial hardships for the affected community are ameliorated.

This functional area may include, but is not limited to:

- tourism industry
- small business
- primary producers.

Recovery planning at municipal, regional and state levels should address each of these aspects of the functional area and provide for the engagement of agencies that can assist with the recovery. Contact Department of Human Services State Emergency Recovery Unit for further advice.

Natural Environment

This functional area refers to the environmental impacts that an emergency may have on a geographic area. These impacts include, but are not limited to:

- air quality
- water quality (including catchment management)
- land degradation and contamination
- marine environment
- natural environment (including public lands and National Parks).

Recovery planning at municipal, regional and state levels should address each of these aspects of the functional area and provide for the engagement of agencies that can assist with the recovery. Contact Department of Human Services State Emergency Recovery Unit for further advice.

Built Environment

This functional area refers to the impact that an emergency may have on physical infrastructure. The objective of this functional area of operation is to ensure 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 lead agency 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
- other essential services (such as school, hospitals, emergency services, banking facilities and shops)

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

Recovery planning at municipal, regional and state levels should address each of these aspects of the functional area and provide for the engagement of agencies that can assist with the recovery. Contact Department of Human Services State Emergency Recovery Unit for further advice.

Recovery Coordination

Recovery Coordination refers to the arrangements that will be used in any situation where more than one department, agency or organisation is required to provide services to assist communities and individuals recover from the impact of an emergency.

Recovery coordination arrangements should provide for:

- assessment of impacts

- input of affected community into decision making
- coordination of service provision
- communication strategies.

Recovery coordination also refers to coordination activities within and across the functional areas described above.

Recovery Coordinator

Recovery Coordinator refers to the person appointed under the Emergency Management Arrangements with responsibility to:

- assess the impact of the emergency
- seek input of the affected community into decision-making
- bring together the responsible agencies to ensure that services and activities are provided in a coordinated manner
- communicate with the affected community the range of activities that will be provided.

Recovery coordinators do not have the authority to direct organisations to undertake a particular course of action. However, there is an expectation that through the recovery planning process, agencies will agree to provide services, and this agreement is documented as part of the planning process.

Recovery Coordinators are appointed at each of the management levels.

- **State Recovery Coordinator:** A position established under section 17B of the *Emergency Management Act* to ensure the overall coordination of recovery in the State of Victoria.
- **Regional Recovery Coordinator:** A position established under section 17D of the *Emergency Management Act*.
- The function of municipal recovery coordination rests with a senior officer of council. The EMMV requires councils to appoint a Municipal Emergency Manager, Municipal Emergency Resources Officer and a Municipal Recovery Manager. The role of “coordinating” municipal recovery strategies would usually be undertaken by one of these appointees.

Lead Agency

Lead Agency refers to agencies that have responsibility for coordinating the development of strategies in respect of functional areas of recovery. Lead agencies will be required to undertake this development at a state or regional level.

Functional Sub-Plans

Functional sub-plans may be developed by lead agencies to document recovery coordination arrangements that are required in each functional area. These plans are developed in conjunction with stakeholders that are likely to provide recovery services in each of these functional areas.

These functional sub-plans should be developed at both state and regional recovery management levels.

Recovery Service Provision

The needs of individuals and communities after an emergency will vary in scale and complexity. However, these needs can usually be met by existing services, supplemented by additional resources where there are capacity issues. Recovery planning and management should initially be on the basis of linking affected individuals into existing services provided by existing agencies. These services should be documented in the recovery components of plans.

Local level agency

Local level agency refers to those agencies that have a capacity to provide service activities to assist the recovery of individuals or communities within the geographic boundary of one or more municipal districts. Some Local level agencies may have an additional capacity to provide services in other localities. These agencies may have also agreed to be a Local level agency in other municipal districts and/or a Regional level agency in one or more Department of Human Services region.

Regional level agency

Regional level agency refers to those agencies that have a capacity to provide recovery service activities to the geographic area defined by the Department of Human Services regional boundaries. Regional level agencies can provide support to local level agencies, or provide services in response to a region-wide or dispersed population event. These agencies may have also agreed to be a regional level agency in other Department of Human Services regions and/or a local level Agency in one or more municipal district.

State level agency

State level agency refers to those agencies that have a capacity to provide a statewide service in support of regional or local level agencies. State level agencies may also provide a service when there is a dispersed population event.

4.3 Scale of recovery

Localised emergencies

Emergencies often occur within a single municipal district. Where this occurs, the municipal recovery arrangements will apply unless the needs of the community exceed the capacity of that municipal council to manage the event. It should be noted that an emergency within one municipal district might have an impact in other districts. Where this occurs, coordination by the Department of Human Services at a regional or state level may be required to ensure that local services are activated in the other municipal districts.

Neighbouring councils may enter into mutual aid agreements to provide support to each other. In some instances a council may take agree to take responsibility for being the lead coordination agency across a municipal boundary. Established understandings and negotiated agreements should be developed prior to events between adjoining councils and regions to address such issues as: reimbursement or sharing of costs, use of resources, access to information and staff support.

Wide area emergencies

In circumstances where the impact of an emergency is experienced over a wide geographic area, the Department of Human Services Regional Recovery Coordinator will be responsible for the coordination of regional recovery activities in support of the affected councils.

Where the impact of the emergency is statewide or involves two or more recovery regions, the State Recovery Coordinator will be responsible for the coordination of recovery activities.

In such events, the management of recovery must still remain at the most local level, however, higher-level coordination of support is essential to ensure all affected people have equitable and appropriate access to the recovery resources available.

The involvement of a higher level of coordination does not mean that the lower levels are absolved of their recovery coordination responsibilities.

Dispersed Population Events

Some events will affect people from a range of geographic areas, who disperse during or after the emergency. This is particularly the case when emergency events occur in industrial, sporting, tourist or commercial environments, and people return to their homes soon after the event.

All planning arrangements at Regional and Municipal management level must be conscious of the responsibility to support recovery activities for events that may occur outside their boundaries, for example in another municipal district, region, state or country.

It is necessary for plans to include provisions to ensure equity of recovery services in such circumstances. This may include the need to develop strategies, based on each event, to:

- Support small numbers of people affected in a specific locality.
- Target a group of affected people that is not easily defined.
- Provide assistance outside the normal geographic boundaries of operation.
- Provide for community input across a broad geographic area.

In this type of event, the Department of Human Services may take the lead in coordinating the access of those affected into recovery services and activities. This coordination may be done at the Department of Human Services regional level or in some instances at the state level.

However, the provision of services will still be through local agencies nominated in the municipal emergency management plans.

The coordination of access usually involves the provision of a single point of contact for those affected and then referral to the most appropriate local recovery service.

4.4 Recovery Planning

Recovery planning is the cornerstone of the recovery arrangements in Victoria. It is a collaborative process involving consultation with all stakeholders.

Formal, multi-agency recovery planning must be undertaken at each of the recovery management levels.

It is imperative that agencies and organisations involved in the recovery arrangements at municipal, regional and state level develop operational plans to ensure that they are able to fulfil the roles and responsibilities they have agreed to carry out.

Municipal Recovery Planning

Municipal councils are required by the *Emergency Management Act (1986)* to prepare a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). This plan must detail the local arrangements for the management of recovery activities.

Recovery components of MEMP's must detail local arrangements for:

- Impact and needs assessments
- Point of access into service system
- Cleanup activities
- Service coordination
- Volunteer coordination
- Community communication sub-plan
- Identification and support of vulnerable populations
- Provision of community development.

The recovery component of the MEMP should identify local resources that can be used to assist individuals and communities affected by emergencies. These resources may include:

- Council owned or controlled assets.
- Council employed or contracted personnel.
- Local agencies that have agreed to participate in the formal emergency recovery arrangements.
- Local community agencies that have a capacity to assist people affected by emergencies.
- Private businesses with a capacity to provide emergency recovery services or activities.

Part 6 of the Manual provides further detail on municipal recovery planning.

The DHS publication *Guidelines for Recovery: Municipal Recovery Planning* provide further advice and guidance for Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees.

Regional Recovery Planning

The State Recovery Coordinator has appointed regional Recovery Coordinators in each Department of Human Service region.

The Regional Recovery Coordinators have responsibility for the preparation and maintenance of Regional Emergency Recovery Plans on the basis of the Department of Human Services administrative regional boundaries.

Regional Emergency Recovery Plans must detail:

- coordination arrangements across the four functional areas of recovery
- regional level recovery agency roles and responsibilities
- communication arrangements between
 - municipalities in the region
 - regional level recovery agencies
 - state level recovery management, and
 - the affected community.

State Level Planning

The State Recovery Coordinator has responsibility for the preparation, testing and maintenance of State Emergency Recovery Arrangements.

4.5 Recovery Management

Initial recovery management is always undertaken at the municipal level. The impact of an event may lead to community needs that exceed the capacity of a municipal council. The council may then seek to escalate the level of management to a regional level. This escalation provides an additional layer of management rather than a replacement layer. Further escalation to the state level of management may be necessary in respect of certain service needs in very large or complex events. In the most serious events the Australian Government may also provide a layer of management in respect of particular services.

Coordination structures

Recovery plans should detail structures that bring together agencies to address recovery related issues at a municipal, regional and state level. In addition, the municipal level plans also should detail arrangements for involving the affected community in the decision making process (see below).

At a regional level, the Regional Emergency Recovery Planning Committee may be convened in response to a regional level emergency to consider issues of a regional significance, and to advise the regional recovery coordinator of key issues for consideration.

At a state level, the State Emergency Recovery Planning Committee may be convened to consider issues of state significance and advise the State Recovery Coordinator and Government of key issues for consideration.

Response and Recovery Interface

Response and recovery are usually concurrent activities in the early stages of an emergency event. Recovery activities should begin as soon as practicable when an emergency occurs.

Municipal Level

Municipal Emergency Management Plans should contain details of the authority to activate the recovery arrangements. This authority should typically rest with senior officers of council that have a delegated emergency management responsibility, or the Chief Executive Officer. Activation of arrangements may be on advice of the:

- Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
- Municipal Emergency Resource Officer
- Regional Recovery Coordinator or Manager.

Generally, at a Municipal level, the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer is responsible for notifying the Municipal Recovery Manager of the potential need for recovery services.

Circumstances where the Regional Recovery Manager may be required to inform the Municipal Recovery Manager of the need for recovery activities may include those where:

- the event has occurred outside the municipal district
- the response to the event is small scale, but the potential impact is large
- there has been no need to activate municipal resources during the response to the event.

The recovery arrangements may be implemented in support of events where no response activities were required.

Regional Level

The authority to activate the Regional Emergency Recovery Plan rests with the Regional Recovery Coordinator or Regional Recovery Manager, on the advice of the:

- Divisional Emergency Response Coordinator
- Municipal Recovery Manager
- State Recovery Coordinator or Manager.

Generally, at a Regional level, the Divisional Emergency Response Coordinator is responsible for notifying the Regional Recovery Coordinator of the potential need for recovery services.

State Level

The authority to activate the State Emergency Recovery Arrangements rests with the State Recovery Coordinator (or delegate), or the State Recovery Manager at the direction of the:

- Premier
- Minister for Police and Emergency Services
- Minister for Community Services

or on the advice of the:

- State Emergency Response Coordinator
- State Emergency Response Officer
- Emergency Services Commissioner
- Chief Health Officer
- Chief Medical Coordinator, Medical Displan.

The State Emergency Response Plan details arrangements for the handover of the coordination of the emergency from the response coordinator to the recovery coordinator.

Ministerial Recovery Taskforces

In some emergency events where there is a significant community-wide impact, the Premier or Minister for Police and Emergency Services may decide to establish a Ministerial Taskforce to oversee the whole-of-government response to the needs of an affected community.

It is not practical or necessary to establish a taskforce after every emergency event, however the benefit of such a taskforce is that it brings a very high level of coordination to recovery activities when this is necessary.

Regional Emergency Recovery Plans and Municipal Emergency Management Plans should recognise the possibility of the establishment of a Ministerial Taskforce and have in place appropriate strategies to support and work cooperatively with any such taskforce.

Membership of the taskforce will be determined by the impact of the emergency, but should include at a minimum:

- Minister for Community Services
- Minister for Police and Emergency Services
- Minister for Victorian Communities

The Premier will appoint the chair of the Taskforce.

Draft Terms of reference of a Ministerial Recovery Taskforce may include:

- Assessing the impact of the emergency on the economy, infrastructure and environment.

- Where there is an impact upon a specific industry working with the relevant industry body, Tourism Victoria, and local organisations to identify opportunities to assist the industry.
- Determining whether existing Government programs and projects can be fast-tracked to boost confidence in affected regions.
- Assessing the need for any additional short-term programs to assist communities and individuals recover from the emergency.
- Recommending to Cabinet a range of medium and longer-term policy initiatives to restore growth opportunities and confidence.
- Recommending restoration strategies to support mitigation programs and increasing community resilience.

The usual lines of communication for such a taskforce will be with the Regional Recovery Coordinator (Department of Human Services) and the Chief Executive Officer of the municipal council.

The Department of Human Services through the State Emergency Recovery Unit will lead a multi-department secretariat in support of any taskforce that is established.

Education and Training

The Department of Human Services has an ongoing commitment to recovery training and education. Training sessions will be made available to personnel of all agencies involved in recovery management, coordination or service provision. Where possible this training should also include other emergency management agencies to encourage greater understanding of issues.

It is the responsibility of all agencies and organisations to ensure personnel activated to provide recovery services or to manage recovery activities are appropriately trained and resourced.

Media Issues

The State Emergency Response Plan provides for arrangements in respect of media management at any incident, including access to emergency sites and the safety of media representatives.

During recovery operations requests for information from the media about coordination and management of recovery activities should be directed to the responsible recovery coordinator at the time.

It is likely that recovery agencies will receive requests for information from media representatives. They should only comment in respect of their specific area of recovery activity and not on the overall progress of recovery or the current situation of the community.

Requests for information about the impact of emergencies, including details of people affected, casualty numbers, and other impact related details should always be referred to the recovery coordinator.

The recovery coordinator at municipal, regional and state level should ensure accurate and current information is available to the media.

During protracted or high profile events it may be advisable to establish a media information centre to which media representatives should be directed.

During the period of response activities, the assistance of the Victoria Police Media Liaison Unit may be requested. After this time, the assistance of the Department of Human Services, Media Liaison Unit may be requested.

4.6 Operational Recovery Considerations

Emergency recovery planners, managers and coordinators need to undertake their responsibilities with awareness of a number of operational considerations.

These represent accepted methods of practice or recognised best practice that should be incorporated into recovery plans and arrangements at each level.

Involvement of Affected Community

Communities recover best when they are supported to manage their own recovery. The primary method of ensuring and fostering community management of recovery after an event is through the use of Community Recovery Committees (CRCs).

Municipal councils and Regional Recovery Coordinators have a responsibility to ensure the establishment of these committees as soon as possible after the emergency. Draft Terms of Reference of CRCs should be included in Municipal Emergency Management Plans and modified to suit the circumstances of the emergency. Local government has a responsibility to resource the establishment of CRCs. Where possible, existing local community representative committees should be used. Part 3 of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria* provides more detail on the establishment and operation of CRCs.

Community Briefings

Community briefings may be conducted by response agencies as part of their role in keeping communities aware of the current emergency situation before, during and after events. Recovery managers should be part of the briefing teams.

As soon as practicable after an emergency, local government should arrange, as part of its Community Communication Plan, community information sessions. The development of these sessions is the first practical step in the process of ensuring a community is actively involved in the recovery management process. These sessions can also be used to support the development of Community Recovery Committees.

The role of community briefings in the recovery context is to:

- Provide clarification of the emergency event (Control agency).
- Provide advice on services available (Recovery agencies).
- Provide input into the development of management strategies (Council).

- Provide advice to affected individuals on how to manage their own recovery, including the provision of preventative health information (Specialist advisers).

Where the emergency has a criminal component, then local government will need to consult with the investigating authority on any necessity to restrict the content of the briefings. Local agreements with response agencies that have responsibility for community briefings will be developed as part of Regional Emergency Recovery Plans and Municipal Emergency Management Plans.

Community Development and Community Development Officers

It is important that an early assessment is made of any need for and likely benefit of a community development service. Community development may be required when:

- The emergency has a demonstrated impact upon community networks.
- Where an affected area is experiencing or is likely to experience socio- economic disadvantage as a result of the emergency.
- The nature of the emergency incurs a high degree of stress within the community that will impact upon its health and wellbeing.

Often multiple community development activities will be taking place in an affected community. The use of a Community Development Officer to coordinate these activities and provide a point of contact for the affected community may be beneficial. It is normal practice that Community Development Officers are appointed and employed by councils. They may seek assistance in funding Community Development Officers positions or community development activities from various government departments or the non-government sector. There may be opportunities to combine the positions of Community Development Officer with that of Service Coordination Officer.

Service Coordination

In many emergency events people will have a complex set of needs. Some people may find it difficult to access the recovery services. Others may need specialist support that is not readily available, or a complex mix of services to meet their needs. This situation can occur when one emergency is followed by another, or where a person's existing circumstances have made them more susceptible to the impact of an event.

An early assessment should be made of the need for and likely benefits of the application of a service coordination model. The appointment of a Service Coordination Officer may be beneficial to assist those most in need of assistance.

Municipal Emergency Management Plans should detail arrangements for the provision of service coordination, including which agency is best placed provide this function. Part 6 of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria* and the Recovery Management Guidelines provide further detail.

Municipal councils may seek assistance in funding Service Coordination Officers positions from state government. As noted above, there may be opportunities to combine the positions of Service Coordination Officer with that of Community Development Officer.

Entry into recovery service system

Whenever possible entry into the recovery management system should occur with a minimum of inconvenience to the affected person.

Municipal Emergency Management Plans and Regional Emergency Recovery Plans must reference the documented agreements between agencies that address entry into the recovery service system.

This documentation must include the agreed protocols for agencies undertaking:

- impact and damage assessments
- outreach services
- 1800 Numbers
- management of recovery centres to facilitate the appropriate collection and distribution of information about the emergency event impacts on the community.

Sharing of personal information

This section of the State Emergency Recovery Arrangements is under development pending legal and privacy advice.

Use of Local Government Resources in Recovery

Councils must have internal arrangements in place to commit council resources to support local recovery activities.

It is expected that this commitment may include:

- Availability and capacity of municipal staff appointed to emergency management positions to fulfil roles and responsibilities.
- Capacity to provide first line support to the affected community, including a capacity to provide a first point of contact for the affected community.
- Availability of council buildings and grounds for such recovery activities that may be necessary to support the community.
- Commitment of council services in respect of emergency repair, replacement and cleanup.

Development and Use of Community Networks

Recovery planners, coordinators and managers should always be cognisant of the value of existing community networks as a conduit for information delivery, needs identification and support of those affected. These established networks are significant in the community and often have an inherent value that newly developed service networks may never develop.

Where possible and appropriate, recovery programs should work with and through these networks.

Community networks that are functioning in an affected community should be actively engaged and supported in the recovery process. In some instances networks may be present in the community but require additional support to enable them to function effectively as a recovery conduit to the community.

Examples of community networks may include:

- Volunteer emergency services
- Church organisations
- School organisations
- Service clubs

Financial Considerations

The emergency management arrangements are predicated on the assumption that agencies agree to meet reasonable costs associated with the provision of services. The general principal is that costs that are within the “reasonable means” of an agency or organisation are met by that agency or organisation.

Expenditure on recovery costs that are exceptional may be eligible for part or full reimbursement under the State’s financial provisions.

Municipal Emergency Management Plans and Regional Emergency Recovery Plans must detail the agreed arrangements and protocols for expenditure where it is likely that reimbursements will be sought.

Further information in respect of financial considerations of emergency recovery coordination, management and service provision is contained in Part 6 and Appendix 1 of Part 8 of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*.

4.7 Testing, Evaluation and Review

Testing of Emergency Recovery Arrangements

Under the direction of the State Recovery Coordinator, agencies and organisations that are identified in the State Emergency Recovery Arrangements will participate in testing of the arrangements detailed in this document at least annually.

Similarly, under the direction of the Regional Recovery Coordinator, regional level agencies and organisations will participate in emergency recovery exercises to test the arrangements and operational procedures of the Regional Emergency Recovery Plan at least annually.

Under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer of the municipal council, municipal level agencies and organisations, will participate in emergency recovery exercises to test the arrangements and operational procedures of the recovery component of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan at least annually.

Emergency recovery exercises may be conducted in a variety of formats and may test various parts of the arrangements at different levels of

recovery management. There should also be testing of the links between the levels of recovery management.

Emergency recovery exercises may be run in conjunction with other emergency management exercises or agency exercises, but must have discrete aims and objectives for the testing the recovery arrangements.

It is expected that municipal councils will summarise the outcomes of exercises for the Regional Recovery Coordinator, and that in turn the Regional Recovery coordinator will provide a summary of all exercises to the State Recovery Coordinator.

Evaluation of Recovery Activities

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.

Municipal councils should conduct an evaluation of recovery operations following activation of the recovery arrangements in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan. The evaluation may be an informal or formal debrief depending on the scale of the activation, and must identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local operational response to the needs of the community.

The Municipal Recovery Manager must ensure that the Regional Recovery Coordinator is made aware of the outcome of the evaluation.

Regional Recovery Coordinators must conduct an evaluation of regional recovery activities following any activation of the arrangements of the Regional Emergency Recovery Plan. This may take the form of debriefs during and after the period of recovery activities.

The Regional Recovery Coordinator must ensure the State Recovery Coordinator is made aware of the outcomes of these evaluations.

The State Recovery Coordinator will conduct an evaluation of recovery activities following any activation of the arrangements in this document. The State Recovery Coordinator may also conduct an evaluation in other circumstances.

Review of the State Emergency Recovery Arrangements

The statewide recovery arrangements have been negotiated and agreed to by the agencies and organisations that participate in them. However, it is essential that these arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis and amended as necessary.

As understanding of recovery continues to evolve, best practice is identified and lessons are learned from activation of recovery arrangements. It is the responsibility of recovery coordinators and managers at all levels to ensure arrangements are reviewed and revised to reflect these developments.

The recovery component of Municipal Emergency Management Plans must be updated at least annually and audited consistent with the

requirements of the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*. In addition, municipal councils should endeavour to ensure that these plans are formally reviewed in consultation with stakeholders on at least a bi-annual basis.

Regional Recovery Coordinators must ensure that Regional Emergency Recovery Plans are regularly updated and that a formal review by the Regional Emergency Recovery planning Committee is undertaken at least every two years. This review must be conducted in consultation with regional stakeholders identified in the plan.

The State Recovery Coordinator must ensure that the State Emergency Recovery Arrangements are regularly updated and that the State Emergency Recovery Planning Committee reviews them on an annual basis. This review should incorporate lessons learned from debriefs of recovery operations during the preceding year.