



► 2014 BUSHFIRES



► OPERATIONAL RESPONSES



► TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

► RESEARCH NEWS

○ Issue 15 | ○ VOLUME 1 | ○ 2014

Victorian Council of Churches

Emergencies

ministry

SUFFERING IS NOT WHAT DESTROYS PEOPLE, RATHER
“SUFFERING WITHOUT MEANING”. VICTOR FRANKL

Being a healing and helping presence is an essential part of the work undertaken by VCC Emergencies Ministry volunteers. More and more people are seeing the value of the presence of VCC in the Emergency Management sector.

Emergency Management

Victoria—EMV 1 July 2014

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) starts life today as the new overarching body for emergency management, coordinating emergency management policy and the implementation of emergency management reform.

As Victoria's first Emergency Management Commissioner, Craig Lapsley is responsible for the overall response to major emergencies. This includes emergency planning through to coordinating the management of the consequences of emergencies. Through this role, Craig is responsible for planning, risk mitigation, relief and recovery, and culture change to ensure the sector works effectively and together with the community before, during and after emergencies.

Neil Robertson is the interim Chief Executive of Emergency Management Victoria. The Chief Executive is responsible for the day-to-day management of Emergency Management Victoria including its role in coordinating investment planning and large scale strategic projects.



TRAINING

Pass on this newsletter to friends you think would like to join this vital ministry. If you are a current volunteer and have not retrained in the last 2—3 years, you are encouraged to look at the training dates for 2014 on our website and sign up for a refresher course in Personal Support. www.vccem.org.au/training



OPERATIONS

Debbie Laphorne—Operations Manager

**TESTED
AND
PROVEN:**

Deployment

- Corangamite Shire Single Incident June 2014
- Macedon Ranges recovery - ongoing
- Melbourne Airport MH17 support July 19-20 2014
- Melton Council – Eynesbury Community Vigil (MH17)
- E Gippsland - Standby for Community gathering , Mallacoota
- Wellington Shire – Jack River Outreach July 2014
- Hume City Council – Shooting August 2014

Exercises

- Metro East Exercise May 22nd 2014
- Barwon South West training and exercise (Moyne) July 2014
- Mornington Peninsula exercise – cancelled due to weather event July 2014
- Moorabool Recovery exercise July 29th
- Nillumbik exercise August / September 2014
- Pyrenees Shire Relief and Recovery Sep – Oct 2014
- Exercise Stringybark Eastern Metro (Knox, Yarra Ranges, Maroondah) October-November 2014
- Kingston / Dandenong exercises
- Frankston Planning group
- Essendon Airport Exercise Oct 2014
- Metro west Operation Fusion October 2014
- Wyndham – September 2014
- Recovery Partner Exercise (facilitated by ARC) November 2014

Area Support—the provision of support from staff to volunteers

Barwon South West Outer
 Barwon South West Inner
 Grampians region group
 Metro South Outer
 Induction of Area Coordinators in BSW Outer (on behalf of CC)
 Meeting with Southern Grampians EMC
 Meeting with Pyrenees EMC
 Meeting with Kingston / Dandenong EMC
 Meeting with Mt Alexander EMC
 Meeting with Frankston EMC





TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Craig Campbell—Assistant State Manager

Whilst we try not to conduct training between the months of November to March, Craig Campbell has provided training to a couple of important and strategic groups.

Training Statistics for Year to Date

Accreditation Training	183
Team Leader Training	16
Coordinator Training Module A	15
Coordinator Training Module B - (Incident Activity Coordination)	0
LGA Intro to PST	30
Professional Development given	22
Total persons to date 2013	266

Professional Development Training

In response to a request from a counselling service a single day's training in disaster trauma was presented to a wider group of counsellors on a fee-for-service basis in June.

LGA Introduction to Personal Support Training

In response to a request from the Metro North West Collaboration a pilot program was drafted and delivered in Nillumbik Shire on a fee for service basis. Thirty staff from four different municipalities attended this training, aimed at preparing council staff to

come off-line from their normal duties to support council recovery efforts following disaster.

Feedback from the training was highly encouraging, and a further five training day are currently scheduled: Melton 22nd August; Whittlesea 3rd and 10th and 16th September; Hobsons Bay 21st October. There is a likelihood of further requests.

One strategic value of delivering this training is partnership building with the municipalities involved, greatly enhancing their awareness of VCC EM and our service delivery with them.

Team Leader Training

Two Team Leader Training events have been held in the last quarter in Bacchus Marsh and Port Fairy, increasing both the number available for this crucial role and the geographical spread.

Currently VCC EM has 1780 volunteers registered on our database.

87% Regional Coordinators in place

78% Area Coordinators in place.

CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY:
Experience vs. Discipline



Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.
Aristotle



RESEARCH

Stuart Stuart—State Manager

“Spiritually Oriented Disaster Psychology” American Psychological Association— 2014, Vol 1 No. 1

Over the last decade, researchers of varying disciplines have been exploring the relationship between mental health and religion in the disaster context.

Aten, O’Grady, Milstein, Boan and Schruba (2014) undertook to find out the impact of religion, spirituality on recovery from trauma and disaster.

Contextually they say that since 1985 there has been a 400% increase in the number of natural disasters globally (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disaster 2007).

Researchers like, Aten, O’Grady, Ai, Cascio, Santangelo, and Evans—Campbell (2005) revealed that people respond differently to different kinds of disasters.

There are groups of religious people who demonstrated negative coping skills based on certain religious ideology. These were often related to ‘man made’ disasters or traumatic events like war or terrorist acts. (Pargament, 2005). ‘Conversely, survivors of natural disasters, which are sometimes referred to as “acts of God,” appear to more readily incorporate spiritual and religious meaning into their interpretations of the disaster, as well as into their responses and coping mechanisms.’

Those survivors that observed a religious or spiritual tradition with an ideology based on judgement, punishment and other negative traits recovered less well than those whose religious or spiritual experience is one of grace, hope and faith.

It is recorded that people’s daily spiritual experiences of religion and spirituality and perceptions of their sense of ‘specialness’ to their deity predicted their degree of spiritual transformation above and beyond the amount of loss they experienced in the event (O’Grady, Rollinson, Hanna, Schreiber-Pan, and Ruiz, 2012).

Research after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York suggests that religion and spirituality serve as a buffer for the potential deleterious effects of disaster and religious comfort helped to protect participants from negative emotional and physical health outcomes commonly associated with loss, and was associated with post-traumatic growth, (Ai et al, 2005).

There are many opportunities for religious and spiritual communities and mental health professionals to collaborate to assist individuals and communities in mitigating the negative psychological consequences of disaster and maximizing potential for post traumatic growth by facilitating healthy spiritual responses to and interpretations of the event (Brenna, Bush, Moses, 2010).

The suggestion is that clergy, faith group leaders, and mental health professionals work together productively in the five essential elements of mental health disaster response: safety, reducing emotional arousal, developing a positive perception of both individual and community capacity coping and recovery, constructive social support, fostering hope (Hobfall, 2007).

Mental health research is identifying approaches to spirituality that can help or hinder psycho spiritual recovery from disaster. Both secular and spiritual health carers need to be aware of the mental health implications of spiritual beliefs and assist survivors in making spiritual meanings that facilitate growth and adjustment (Brenner, Bush, Moses, 2010).

In conclusion, research continues to demonstrate that for many disaster survivors, religion and spirituality play important roles in the recovery process.

In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.