



Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry Newsletter

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*Suffering is not what destroys people, rather “suffering without meaning”.
(Victor Frankl)*

A Bi Monthly Newsletter

Issue No 6. July 2012

Moir Shire Outreach

VCC EM continues to support flood affected communities in the Moira Shire

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Operations

VCC EM has responded to or been placed on stand by for number of events across Victoria.

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2012 training plan



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Multi-faith Project

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Moir Shire Outreach - VCC EM Response

The VCC Emergencies Ministry continues to support flood affected individuals and communities across the Moira Shire.

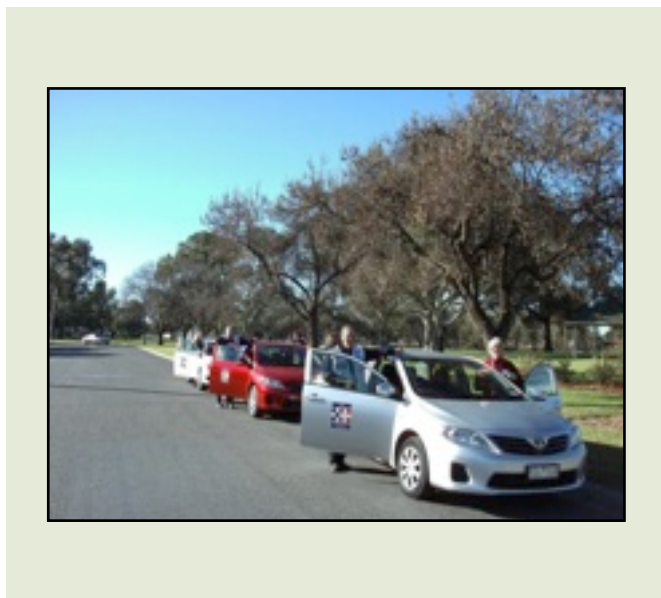
Cars have been hired (pictured) to support volunteers with their work. Four teams in cars have spread their support, care and compassion across the shire from Barnah in the west to Wilby in the east, Cobram in the north and Katandra in the south.

Debbie Lapthorne (Vol. Operations Co-ordinator) and her dedicated teams of volunteer co-ordinators and workers have undertaken a massive task to make sure as many people as possible have had access to information and support during this time.

"The increasing strength and depth of our deployment structures has enabled us to handle some very significant requests over the first seven months of 2012. If we

thought that the cooler weather of January and February was going to make for an easy

To date the data for the Moira Shire support is:



summer season, the rains of March 2012 changed all of that!!!" says Debbie.

Relief & Recovery:

276 volunteers
3152 Contacts with affected people.

Outreach:

2038 properties visited
724 individuals contacted,
40 people referred to Mental Health services.

PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO SUPPORT
FLOOD AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN
THE NORTH EAST.

CONTACT DEBBIE LAPTHORNE

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Moiria Outreach with Cars



Gippsland Team



Gippsland Team

Operations:

Debbie Laphorne

In the past two months, the VCC EM has been very busy developing structures, processes and policies which will support the ever changing operational requirements in the future.

Debbie Laphorne - Operations Coordinator states "The way in which we approach our deployment is certainly different to our approach three years ago. We continue to earn our place at the table with the larger organisations - our input is not only valued but requested, and our presence is now expected rather than questioned. That is not to say that the work undertaken in years gone by was any lesser quality, it has always been an excellent service, from people whose hearts are to serve, love and support.... but the processes, policies and procedures which are now in place have shown the emergency management agencies, and state and local governments of the necessary program development in response to the changing arrangements in Victoria."

She goes on to say "As we look to the latter part of 2012, it is imperative that we maintain our momentum. We need to continue to appoint volunteer Regional and Area Coordinators in places where there are gaps. We need to increase the number of stand alone Incident Activity Coordinators, who are there to either support current structures or act independently at an event."

It is an incredible privilege to work with all in VCC EM and I look forward to the days ahead as we continue to serve the community by our "Compassion in times of Crisis".



Mildura Tanker roll over

OPERATIONAL LOG

June 26, 2012

Petrol Tanker roll over, Mildura

VCC EM on stand by for Personal Support to evacuated caravan park residents.

June 30, 2012

Gippsland predicted rainfall

VCC EM on stand by - stood down next day

July 5, 2012

Dunkeld Fire - Information contact to VCC EM

July 9, 2012

Operational readiness, rain event NE Victoria

July 11, 2012

HOBEX - pre exercise briefing

July 13, 2012

Stonnington City Council - Gas Leak - Evacuation.

VCC EM on stand by.

July 18, 2012

Airport power outage - contact by DHS

VCC EM on stand by.

July 19, 2012

HOBEX - Hobsons Bay City Council Emergency Exercise.

Involved were 13 Personal Support Workers, Metro West Regional Coordinator, Hobsons Bay and Wyndham Area Coordinators.

THE FLOOD RESPONSE IS NOT YET OVER!!!!

We need people who can spare a couple of days here and there, or a week here and there to volunteer for outreach.

Please call Debbie Laphorne on 0418 691 490 or email at dlaphorne@yahoo.com



ENCOURAGE PEOPLE IN
YOUR FAITH
COMMUNITY TO TAKE
UP TRAINING AND BE A
PART OF THIS VITAL
SUPPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY!!!

Call 9650 4511 for further
details

www.vccem.org.au/training



Training & Development

The 2012 Training Schedule has been released.

To view training dates and register, please go online at www.vccem.org.au and go to Training page. There you will find these dates and the registration process.

As we complete nearly five months of Personal Support deployment to the Hume Region floods we celebrate effective support of 4306 affected people with 477 volunteer days in relief and recovery centres and visits to 2038 homes! During this time also we have responded in Gippsland floods, at the Melbourne Airport (twice), and in a number of smaller events.

The statistic that is not documented is the crucial contribution by various and countless **Coordinators** – Area and Regional Coordinators, Incident/Activity Coordinators and a new Operation Coordinator role – all volunteers delivering remarkable 'behind the scenes' service. Without this service the truly impressive statistics above could never have happened.

We are fortunate indeed that **Coordinator Training** had commenced prior to the Hume floods. This event has highlighted just how important this training is!

The one day **Coordinator Training Module B** is scheduled for Wed 8th August in Mirboo North, and Mon 20th August in Wangaratta. This Module prepares Coordinators for deployment tasks.

Module A has been designed and will be presented to all attending the Coordinators

Further Impressions - Craig Campbell

Conference on Wed 24th October. It deals with recruitment and maintenance of volunteers, with

VCC EM organisational policy context and managing external relationships.

Module D is a Deployment Reflection Paper available to all who are deployed to an event – it will become a required component for those becoming Coordinators.

From the Reflection Paper:

The principle behind this Deployment Reflection Paper is intentional reflection on practice, to link theory and practice and wider experience.

Generally a response of about 500 words is sufficient – you set your own limit.

The Deployment Reflection Paper will be available on our website at www.vccem.org.au shortly, and all those who have been deployed are invited to make use of this development resource. (Find it under Resources).

For further information on the Coordinator Training package please contact ccampbell@vcc.org.au

Further Reflection:

A feature of most training events during 2012 has been to remarkable richness that comes as we embrace cultural and faith diversity. Most Level 1 and Level 2 training this year has included personal support volunteers and chaplains from diverse language groups, cultures and faiths.

The value of this wider inclusion was comprehensively demonstrated in the HOBEX exercise where Karen, Vietnamese and Chinese speaking VCC EM personnel were highly valued by partner organisations and by the affected people themselves. Imagine trying to register your presence at a Relief Centre where nobody speaks your language!

As it is for language so it is for cultural connection, and for faith-based spiritual support. We do our best work when we can speak the 'language' of the affected person.

I am encouraged that in all cases the training was richer for the presence of these diverse backgrounds. The move into multi-faith training is in fact seamless apart from this sense of greater depth through wider inclusion.

Craig Campbell

Craig Campbell, D Min Studies.

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY - DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE CAPACITY SURVEY

VCC Emergencies Ministry program took part in a study by Melbourne University into the workforce capacity to support mental health issues during disasters.

More than **18.5%** of the 800 respondents to the survey were VCC Emergencies Ministry program volunteers.

Thank you to all who responded.



Multi-faith Project

We continue our exciting journey as a multifaith and multicultural program.

In the beginning of July we held training at Quang Minh Buddhist Temple in Braybrook in Melbourne's western suburbs. We had thirty-five new volunteers attend. There were twenty Vietnamese Buddhists and one Vietnamese Catholic nominated by the temple itself, including the abbot Thich Phuoc Tan OAM. Four Laotian Buddhist monks, ten Anglo-Australian Buddhists and a Christian minister also participated.

Two weeks later we were involved in HOBEX. Three Karen-speaking volunteers, a Vietnamese-speaking personal support worker, and a Buddhist chaplain who speaks Malay, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Hokkien, were involved. Many of

the "affected people" in HOBEX did not speak English and the presence of our multilingual volunteers was absolutely crucial.

The latest census figures show the increasing religious and cultural diversity in Victoria. For example, the number of Punjabi speakers has grown by 207%. Hinduism is now the fastest growing religion in Victoria. To have the capacity to serve the Victorian community in times of crisis, our volunteers need to reflect this cultural and religious diversity. We are working in partnership with Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities to train volunteers who can serve not only their communities, but the wider community too. In the coming months we will hold more training sessions in Buddhist,

Hindu and Sikh temples and Muslim mosques.

To find out more about cultural and religious seminars, please contact Martin West on 9650 4511 or mwest@vcc.org.au



Research

New research is emerging related to the benefits of providing an holistic broad based psycho-spiritual care framework for disaster trauma affected individuals and communities

Mazlow's Heirarchy of Needs - a new paradigm! Cont.

We continue to look at the new developments and understandings from Mazlow's Heirarchy of Needs and the implications for emergency management arrangements in Victoria.

As previously discussed, Abraham Mazlow developed his theory from a predominantly individualist cultural paradigm. He continued to develop his theory in the 1960's to include a sixth stage - Transcendence - which would address his growing understanding of the importance of spirituality in how people function in society.

I spoke in the last newsletter of the limitations of Mazlow's 5 stage hierarchy when applied across cultural difference, particularly in a collectivist society where 'belonging' is central to social functioning.

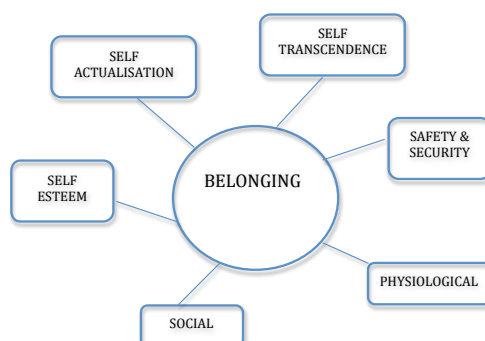


We now understand that Esteem Needs which appear on Mazlow's Hierarchy as the fourth stage is problematic in that human developmental theory would suggest that



self esteem is something which is imperative in the early stages of development.

I propose that another way to understand human development in the context of trauma recovery, taking on board Mazlow's 6 stages could look like this:



The notion of belonging becomes central to human need, from which all other aspects of life, as outlined in Mazlow's theory can be obtained.

This model allows for a more flexible approach to recovery development. People can have their needs met individually, simultaneously, and are able to move backward and forward, which is a significant limitation to Mazlow's hierarchy. Mazlow indicated that people would progress through the stages depending on how their needs in a preceding stage were fulfilled. This adapted model takes away the constraints of time, hierarchy and rigidity.

Currently, emergency managers in local government and state government agencies like the Department of Human Services use, as part of policy and practice development, Mazlow's Heirarchy of Needs - as we understood it to be and as it has been historically published and taught.

It makes sense from this understanding that as long as the basic physical needs are met, people's recovery trajectory will be positive. However, this is not our experience. It is often observed that despite providing 'soup, soap and shelter' to affected individuals, their emotional and social needs continue to manifest.



I have heard it said in emergency management meetings that 'we don't want people to become too comfortable at the relief centre, so we purposefully provide only enough physical support for the short term, as we want to get them out of there'. This kind of statement does not take into account the long term costs of the absence of or inadequate provision of psychosocial support.

Individuals who present to a relief centre do so as a fully formed human being, not a compartmentalized person. In their fully formed state, they require safety, containment and predictability. Affected people will need shelter, food, water and information. But this alone is not enough to support a positive psychosocial recovery trajectory.

Human need and development dictates that affected people also need belonging. Belonging involves all aspects of Mazlow's original hierarchy of need with the addition of self transcendence. Belonging is a form of connectedness and this connectedness supports positive psychosocial recovery. If i am positively connected and belong to self, others, or a larger paradigm of something/ someone beyond myself, I have a better chance of achieving all other needs.

Connection is more than the provision of shelter, food, water and information. It is the meaningful human interaction with a non affected person in the provision of compassion, comfort, care with dignity and hope. This is inclusive of emotional spiritual care and seeks not to compartmentalize human need but sees the person as a whole and complete being whose needs are intertwined in the event. It seeks to support the recovery trajectory through the integration of the event by providing a safe place to talk about the experience.

It's only when an affected person can find the language for the experience that true recovery can occur.

**The Rev Stuart Stuart - State Manager
M Em Mgt., B Soc Wk. MAASW**