The Application of the Vulnerable Persons Register in the Black Summer Fires

East Gippsland
2019/2020

Children With Additional Needs
Working Group
www.cwanwg.com.au

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The members of the Children with Additional Needs Working Group would like to acknowledge the First Custodians of the land, the Gunaikurnai people and the Monero and Bidawel people in the far East, of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire and on which we work and play. We deeply acknowledge their ongoing connection to culture and country and acknowledge that their land was never ceded.

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(Adapted from the Australian Resilience Disaster Hub, n.d.)

What happened during the Black Summer Fires?

(Adapted from the Australian Resilience Disaster Hub, n.d.)

The bushfire season begun in East Gippsland on 21 November 2019 when a series of lightning strikes started fires around the communities of Buchan South, Buchan and Sunny Point together with a further 150 fires across the state. A further two fires were active around the Bruthen and Gelantipy areas at the same time which had grown to 1750ha and 600 ha respectively.

The 20th of December saw further fire ignite around Marthavale, enough to cause concern to the communities of Ensay, Tambo Crossing and the closure of the Great Alpine Road. On the 21st of December, fires combined creating a 'complex' which continued to grow. During the period between 21 and 30th December, predications for fire conditions deteriorated resulting in warnings to visitors and residents to leave high risk areas stretching from Bairnsdale to the New South Wales Border.

Dry lightning (lightening activity which is not complimented by significant rainfall) struck East Gippsland throughout the 30th of December, causing new fires to start while at least 130,000ha combined area of fire activity continued to burn. Such was the intensity of fire activity, some fires created their own weather patterns, triggering more lightning and thunder activity. Given the enormity of the fire activity, many roads were cut resulting in limited to no access to local communities.

On the 31st of December, a fire reached the coastal town of Mallacoota where several thousand people were isolated, and more than 60 houses destroyed. On the same day, at least seven emergency warnings were in place across East Gippsland affecting more than 80 communities. A fire approached the town of Lakes Entrance, and an emergency warning was issued for the township and surrounds, resulting in the evacuation of approximately 30,000 holiday makers and residents. It was not the first time the evacuation warning was given for the Black Summer Fires.

More than 230,000ha of land had been destroyed, with many communities left without the ability to communicate and living with no power. A total of 2105 individuals attended Emergency Relief Centres across East Gippsland on this day alone.

Communities including Wairewa, Sarsfield, Gelantipy, Buchan, Reedy Flat, Genoa and Mallacoota among others, reported heavy losses of property and infrastructure on 1st January 2020. The Princes highway was closed east of Bairnsdale, leaving over 80 towns isolated. The Premier of Victoria declared a state of disaster for the Shire of East Gippsland amongst others with a warning to leave areas of high risk due to continued worsening conditions.

Emergency warnings continued throughout the 3rd and 4th January with mass evacuations of people from Omeo. Mallacoota now stands as one of the largest ever maritime evacuations in Australia's history following a natural disaster.

Over 1240 people attended the Bairnsdale Emergency Relief Centre with 35 individuals staying inside the facility and 70 people in tents and caravans onsite (EGSC, 2023).

Emergency Relief Centres continued to operate at many locations across East Gippsland, with further centres opening up in neighbouring Local Government areas of Wellington and Latrobe. On the 6th January, 700 people were counted at the Bairnsdale Relief Centre, four babies and 15 children under 16, 5 'vulnerable' people and 160 found themselves sleeping at the location, 60 inside and 100 outside in the grounds of the Relief Centre (EGSC, 2023).

Further fires started in East Gippsland around 13th January affecting Tamboon and Tamboon South. The East Gippsland fires recorded the worst air quality in the world on the 14th January and authorities warned vulnerable groups to stay indoors.

On the 20/21 January 2020, rain fell for the first time, reaching much of the fire affected areas providing significant relief. Some fires were still active toward the end of January with the Princes Highway finally reopening between the NSW border and Orbost on 4th February. Mid-February saw the 'Snowy Complex' of fires still burning and it was declared 'contained' on the 27 Feb 2020 after burning 663,000 ha.
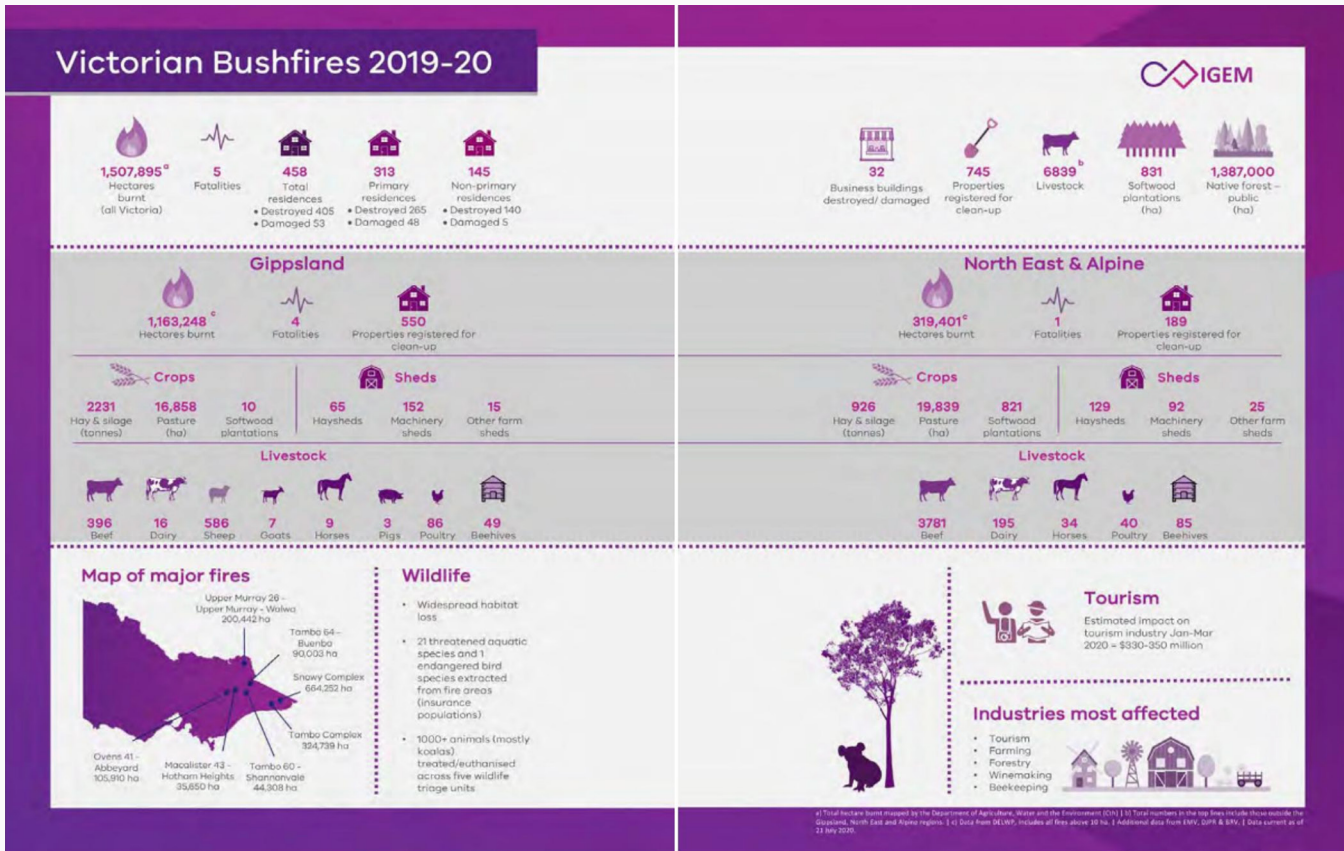
Figure 1: Victorian Bushfires 2019/2020 and their impact (Community Bushfire Connection, n.d.).

As of 28 May 2020, the Insurance Council of Australia estimated that the Victorian bushfires generated approximately 3,050 insurance claims, with over 458 residences destroyed throughout the East Gippsland Region. The tourism industry estimated the total impact of the fires to be around $330 million dollars. A total of 1.5 million hectares of land was burned and sadly, four lives lost in East Gippsland.

In 2021, the proportion of residents living with a disability and needing assistance in East Gippsland was 7.7% equating to just over 3750 individuals and a marked increase since 2016 when it was 6.8% (ID Community, 2023). The Regional Victoria rate was 6.9% in 2021 (ID Community, 2023). Under the definition of "Vulnerable" as stated in the Vulnerable Persons in Emergency Policy (Department of Health and Human Services, 2018), there are 39 people listed on the Vulnerable Persons Register in East Gippsland in 2023 (East Gippsland Shire Council, personal communication, April 06, 2023).

The Vulnerable Persons in Emergency Policy

A Timeline

The Vulnerable Persons in Emergency Policy

A Timeline

The Vulnerable persons in emergency policy (VPE) has a long history, beginning with the Black Saturday fires in 2009 where over 173 people lost their lives. Figure 2 captures a timeline of events since the inception of the Vulnerable Persons Policy.
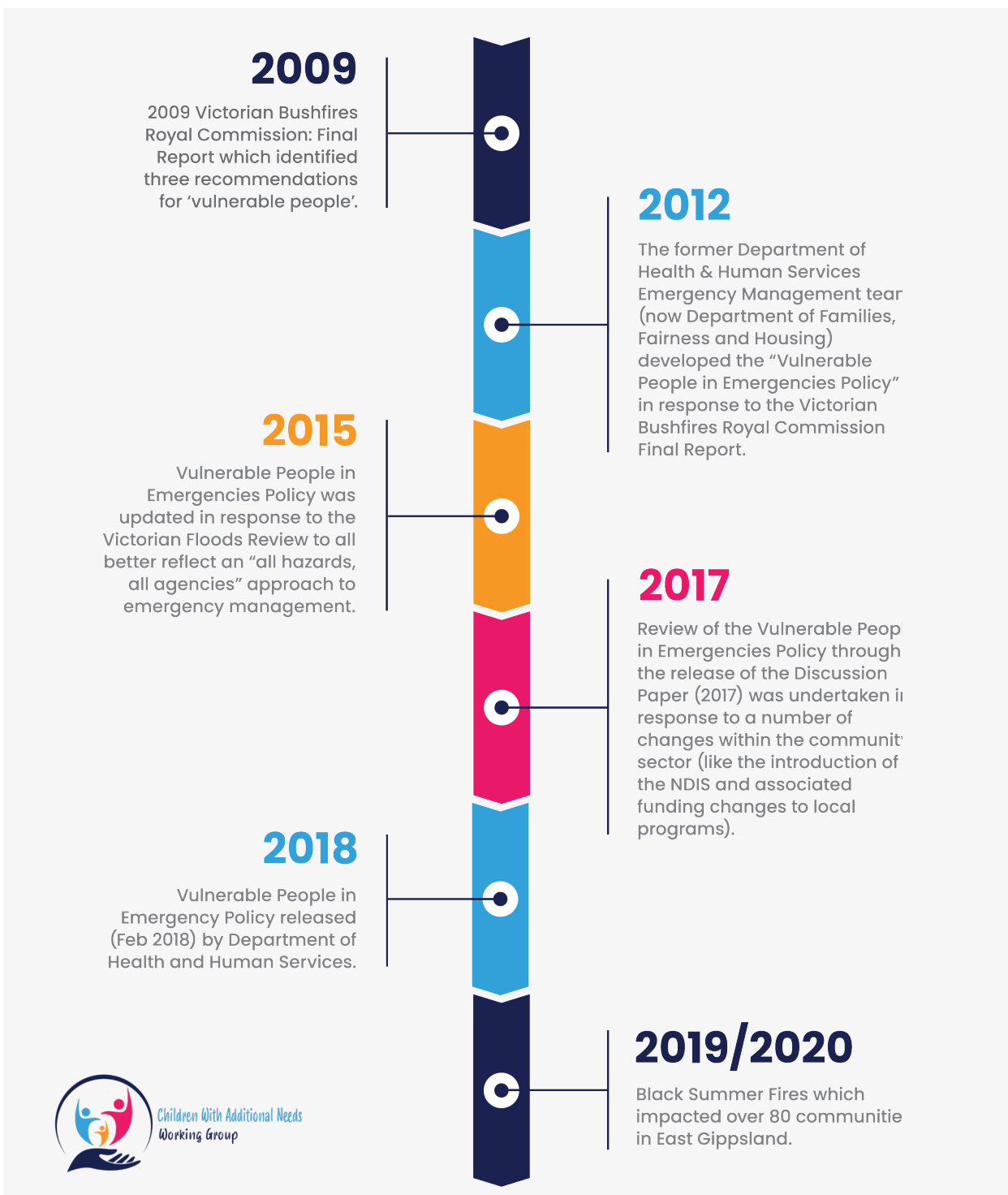
2009

2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission: Final Report which identified three recommendations for 'vulnerable people'.

2012

The former Department of Health & Human Services Emergency Management tear (now Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) developed the "Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy" in response to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report.

2015

Vulnerable People in Emergencies Policy was updated in response to the Victorian Floods Review to all better reflect an "all hazards, all agencies" approach to emergency management.

2017

Review of the Vulnerable Peop in Emergencies Policy through the release of the Discussion Paper (2017) was undertaken i response to a number of changes within the communit sector (like the introduction of the NDIS and associated funding changes to local programs).

2018

Vulnerable People in Emergency Policy released (Feb 2018) by Department of Health and Human Services.

Children With Additional Needs Working Group

2019/2020

Black Summer Fires which impacted over 80 communitie in East Gippsland.

Figure 2: Vulnerable Persons timeline

Setting the policy context

Vulnerable Persons and the Vulnerable Persons Register

Setting the Policy Context

Vulnerable Persons and the Vulnerable Persons Register

2009 – The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission made three recommendations to protect the most vulnerable members of our community as a direct result of the Black Saturday bushfires.

> ### *Recommendation 3*
>
> *"The State establish mechanisms for helping municipal councils to undertake local planning that tailors bushfire safety options to the needs of individual communities. In doing this planning, councils should:*

3.1:	*urgently develop for communities at risk of bushfire local plans that contain contingency options such as evacuation and shelter*
3.2:	*document in municipal emergency management plans and other relevant plans facilities where vulnerable people are likely to be situated, for example, aged care facilities, hospitals, schools and child care centres*
3.3:	*compile and maintain a list of vulnerable residents who need tailored advice of a recommendation to evacuate and provide this list to local police and anyone else with pre-arranged responsibility for helping vulnerable residents to escape."*

(Teague et.al. 2010, page 3).

Vulnerable Persons in an Emergency Policy 2012

Vulnerable Persons in an Emergency Policy 2012

The Vulnerable Persons in an Emergency policy (VPE) (Department Health & Human Services, 2018) defines a vulnerable person as:

✔ *"someone living in the community who is:*
frail, and/or physically or cognitively impaired; and
unable to comprehend warnings and directions and/or
respond in an emergency situation."
(Department of Health and Human Services 2018, page 7).

✔ **To be included on a Vulnerable Person's Register, a person additionally:**
"cannot identify person or community support networks
to help them in an emergency situation."
(DHHS 2018, page 9).

In 2012, the then VPE Policy was designed to:

1	Help vulnerable people with their emergency planning;
2	Develop a list of people deemed as vulnerable (meeting the criteria above) with the list being held by the local municipal council and made available to police and others during an emergency event; and
3	Local lists for facilities are developed where vulnerable can be gathered or located.

By reshaping the definition of 'vulnerable' and moving away from a bushfire approach to all hazards approach in 2012, Garlick (2015) believes that the VPE from 2012, eroded direct engagement between emergency managers and services and vulnerable people themselves to a model of funded home care and health programs working with vulnerable clients. These programs support the development of individual preparedness plans, but it relies on the individuals to be connected with a defined program. The challenge is the many other 'vulnerable' people who may not meet the definition of vulnerable as outlined in the policy, but still require significant support, often relying on communities who are under resourced and underfunded to meet their needs. By placing more 'boundaries' around the definition of vulnerable, it severely reduces the eligibility (Garlick, 2015).

The definition of vulnerable, has not changed since the 2012, ensuring that Garlick's (2015) summary of the removal of the following personal characteristics are still relevant today in 2023 being that individuals are not considered 'vulnerable' due to:

Individuals living in metropolitan Melbourne (outside the boundaries of CFA);

Persons living in care facilities like nursing homes and supported residential properties;

Children younger than 12 (it is assumed that an adult will maintain supervision);

Individuals who can understand emergency warnings;

Individuals who have developed an emergency plan; and

Individuals who have identified a person/people who can help them if an emergency occurs

In summary, Garlick (2015) states "to be placed on the Vulnerable Persons Register, a person has to live within the Country Fire Authority area of responsibility, receive home based care assistance from a DHHS funded agency, be older than seventy and/or disabled, be incapable of planning, unable to understand warnings and be completely socially isolated." (Garlick 2015, page 3).

Vulnerable People in an Emergency Policy Discussion Paper (2017)

Vulnerable People in an Emergency Policy Discussion Paper (2017)

A further review of the VPE Policy was undertaken in 2017.

The Review of the Vulnerable People in Emergencies policy – Discussion paper 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services defined the objectives of the review:

To effectively engage with the broader emergency management and community services sector to better understand the needs of vulnerable people in the context of emergencies;

To capture the experience of those with a knowledge of or role implementing the policy and reflect on the lessons learnt to identify possible solutions;

To reflect on the changing face of emergencies and developments in the emergency management and community services sector to help inform a review of this policy; and

To contribute to the development of a policy that focuses on the outcomes and is complementary to a whole-of-government approach to supporting the needs of vulnerable people in an emergency.

Department of Health and Human Services, page vi, 2017.

Submissions to the Discussion Paper (2017)

A number of submissions were received because of the Discussion Paper (DHHS, 2017) however at the time of writing, it appears that feedback received has not been considered, nor the VPE (DHHS, 2018) changed as a result.

Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) in its submission (VCOSS, 2018) outlined a number of considerations in response to the Discussion Paper. In summary, these include (but not limited to):

The expansion of the Victorian people in emergencies policy to include **all hazards across the entire state**, to assist with consistency of other statewide policies for example the DHHS Heat Health Alerts;

Expanding the definition of vulnerable to include those at highest risk during an emergency, **supporting the inclusion of individuals** who may be s**ocially isolated and homeless.** VCOSS (2018) also noted that the VPE does not meet the original intent of the recommendations of vulnerable the 2009 Bushfire Royal Commission which has since resulted in a retraction of eligibility. In addition, VCOSS (2018) also suggested the following be considered to meet eligibility:

- ✓ Women who are older
- ✓ Frail
- ✓ Women with a disability
- ✓ People living in poverty
- ✓ Refugees and asylum seekers

People first language adoption. Use 'people at (increased) risk' instead of vulnerable people;

Use a **strengths-based approach** to build the reliance of people at greater risk with emergency management to work with the community sector to help build skills and different approaches to people with a disability, rather than leave preparedness planning to individuals, increasing the risk of planning not being done;

Fund community organisations to implement the VPE policy – noting that there is a lack of clarity around who supports emergency preparedness and planning for households and individuals. The roles and responsibilities of individuals who are at greater risk is still quite unclear and requires further support and training to help; and

Develop a framework to support organisations to implement the policy, including through ongoing training and capacity building.

Further information can be found within the VCOSS (2018) which explores more of the nuances of the Vulnerable Persons Register.

Feb 2018 – VPE Policy

Confirmation has been received from Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) that the most recent VPE (DHHS, 2018) continues to be the most recent document guiding vulnerable people in Victoria. It appears that the VPE (DHHS, 2018) document has not considered any feedback received through the Discussion Paper review process at this point (DFFH, personal communication, May 2023).

The Application of the VPR within East Gippsland during Black Summer Fires (19/20)

The Application of the VPR within East Gippsland during Black Summer Fires (19/20)

Who are the East Gippsland Children with Additional Needs Working Group?

In 2013, Good Beginnings Australia (merged with Save the Children Australia in 2015), developed the State of East Gippsland's Children and Youth Report (the Report) with funding through the Ian Potter Foundation, the RE Ross Trust and Gandel Philanthropy. The Report provides a framework that not only measured how children and young people were doing, would also track changes into the future. The Report used data to tell the story of wellbeing through wide and varied consultation where five areas/domains of wellbeing were created.

Following the Report, Good Beginnings obtained further funding to establish the Children's Wellbeing Initiative (CWI) in partnership with the Children's Wellbeing Collective. The Children's Wellbeing Initiative draws on collective impact/collaboration principles to improve children's wellbeing through five priority areas which were identified by consultation using selected indicators in the Report. The five priority areas include:

1	**Children with Additional Needs –** **Children get the support they need for development**
2	Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing – Families can support psycho-social needs
3	Family Violence Prevention – Strong families demonstrate respectful relationships
4	Substance Abuse Prevention - Strong families with positive attitudes and behaviours
5	Service Access

The Children with Additional Needs Working Group (CWANWG) was established in 2016 to focus on Priority 1 – Children with Additional Needs; Children get the support they need for development.

The CWANWG was successful in obtaining Local Economic Recovery Funding through Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) in 2021 to work with families, carers and service providers to explore their experiences through the Black Summer fires. This resulted in the Bushfire Recovery and Resilience Project & Report (CWANWG, 2022). As a result of this work, the CWANWG recognised a gap in the application of the Vulnerable Persons Register (VPR) within the Black Summer Fires.

As already stated, the VPE policy (DHHS, 2018) definition of a vulnerable person is:

"someone living in the community who is:
frail, and/or physically or cognitively impaired; and
unable to comprehend warnings and directions and/or
respond in an emergency situation."
(Department of Health and Human Services 2018, page 7).

To be included on a Vulnerable Person's Register, a person additionally:
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Observations through the Black Summer Fires 2019/2020

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During the Black Summer Fires, it appears that communities looked after their own residents and the VPR was triggered for the 39 East Gippsland residents. Other observations included:

a	The VPR was managed at a local level with local staff;
b	Local communities meet at least six monthly to discuss who has moved into town, and which organisations need to continue to work with residents;
c	During the Black Summer Fires, the application of the East Gippsland Shire Vulnerable Persons Register was: ✓ Sought out by the Emergency Management Liaison Officer (Victoria Police) ✓ Victoria Police Emergency Management Liaison Officer (often someone who works regionally or flown in from another area across the State) worked with local Victoria Police staff located within community to verify status of those evacuating

The experiences of two local communities living through Black Summer Fires have been collected as Case Studies. Case Study 1 reflects the experience of a town in East Gippsland renamed "Ray's Morass" for the purposes of this paper. This town have their own register.

Case Study 1

VPR Application in 'Ray's Morass'

Case Study 1

VPR Application in 'Ray's Morass'

The Black Summer Fires of 2019/2020 severely impacted many communities across the East Gippsland region. For the purposes of this Case Study, the 'community' will be known as 'Ray's Morass'.

Ray's Morass has a small population and is the 'hub' of several smaller surrounding communities who use it as their "go to" in times of an emergency (any natural disaster). It is important to note that many of the residents in this community live day to day. They often shop for their food daily due to financial pressures and fill up their vehicles with petrol when they can afford it. More people are moving into the area because it is 'affordable'. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many new families and individuals settling in the town are unskilled and therefore employment is difficult to obtain for many newcomers to the area

The small town of Ray's Morass has a service who has assigned key workers to many families and their children to help with challenges like drug and alcohol prevention, disability support and general parental support. New families with children moving to the area are 'picked up' during monthly meetings and supports are put in place if needed.

This monthly 'meeting' allows all workers to know and understand who is in the area and the supports they may need, including in times of an emergency.

During Black Summer, a family of 7 children under the age of 13 and one with a disability (who has at least 2 children with a disability) required support. Not meeting the "Vulnerable Persons Register" eligibility, this family were supported by the local key worker and health organisation to evacuate them. This included the hiring of a bus, car seats and prams to move the family out of the area to other support in Melbourne.

The family have no transport, live on a low income and have no means to move their family if evacuation is required.

The organisations supporting Ray's Morass generally know who requires the support when needed in times of an emergency. More support is likely to be scaled up with the logistics and movement of people and resources that is required to prepare. In discussions with community organisations, the feeling is that they 'look after everyone' in times of need. The health organisation in this case has advised "the VPR does not work for this community. We don't even know who is on it or how to access it. We know we can take care of our own people and are happy to do so with a lot more funding and support."

Opportunities:

- ✔ Discussions with families and carers about their preparedness and how they will manage during an emergency. This can be done by training those who are working with families/carers and have an established relationship to discuss preparedness (or inviting in services who can help).
- ✔ More proactive conversations for who is on the VPR and whether there is a family/carer who are not being supported through the year, rather than when an emergency happens.
- ✔ Funding the town of Ray's Morass to support their community members (residents) with everything required.
- ✔ Community planning to enable future planning for times of emergency (who needs the support and what is required for them to be safe).

Challenges and blockages to using the VPR:

- ✔ The community of Ray's Morass does not understand how to work with families/carers and individuals to register on the VPR.
- ✔ Health organisations are not able to access the information and do not know who is on the VPR to assist in times of emergency (or help plan before hand) and fear they are possibly missing members of community who will be overlooked in times of emergency.
- ✔ Community needs to feel confident about the VPR – we need more education to help individuals
- ✔ More Health workers to be aware of the VPR and what it means – how can we work together. Currently we work in isolation and look after the clients we are aware of.

Case Study 2

The Application of the VPR in Jirrah Creek

Case Study 2

The Application of the VPR in Jirrah Creek

The Black Summer Fires of 2019/2020 severely impacted many communities across the East Gippsland region. For the purposes of this Case Study, the 'community' will be known as 'Jirrah Creek'.

Jirrah Creek has a very small population and is the 'hub' of a number of smaller surrounding communities who use Jirrah Creek as their "go to" in times of an emergency (any natural disaster).

In the community, there is a high level of confidence of known residents who are likely to need more support than others. As it currently stands, the local health organisation works with local Victoria Police personnel and together they identify who in their community is at "greater risk" and will need extra support. This happens in the latter half of the year, every year. It helps determine who may have moved into the community, who may have moved out of the community and who is still in community to be supported. Jirrah Creek health organisation members are aware of the Vulnerable Persons Register's existence however do not actively prescribe to it.

In the Black Summer Fires, Jirrah Creek health organisations advised that on the really hot days, those who needed extra support were driven to a local organisation who had access to air conditioning so that residents were more comfortable. When fire surrounded the community, the residents were moved to a 'place of last resort' with other members of community. This was very frightening for many residents who shared the space with many also seeking refuge. It was unlikely to matter if residents met criteria or not, all were treated the same. In this instance, the 'label' of vulnerable was inclusive of all residents who were identified as needing extra support.

Opportunities:

- Communities already know who to look after in times of emergency.
- Emergency Planning – helping individual residents know and understand their own risk
- Most of the residents have been in the area for most of their lives and understand their environment, making the call to evacuate where necessary.
- Working with residents at a local level to identify who needs extra support, while balancing dignity of risk with duty of care.
- Further discussions with individuals on their own preparedness. Most people are likely to rely on local services to help (no family/friends in community to rely on), leaving local organisations to assist. The logistics required to 'help' these individuals is significant, particularly if supports own circumstances require them to help themselves first. More funding to be allocated to have extra supports in place to help those who need it.
- Training of supports who have established relationships with residents to help be better prepared, and then communicating needs to organisations/agencies so they understand the individual's plans and where they may be called on to help, as opposed to things happening on the day of an emergency. Knowledge is power.
- Eligibility of VPR to be loosened (if it is to remain as a priority to help protect residents). Understanding what the gap is between those who are eligible and those who are not. How well communicated is the expectation on communities to look after residents who may be at greater risk but do not meet eligibility criteria? The increase workload of those living in small communities who already struggle with staffing and places the process at risk.
- Understanding what other options are available to the residents if they did choose to leave. Where would they stay and who would pay for it?

The biggest blockages to using the VPR include:

- The eligibility criteria leave many residents 'not eligible' by definition of the criteria
- It takes too much time to call through to "Bairnsdale" in times of emergency. The pre-planning work is not active nor followed up/through in the quieter times by anyone

An East Gippsland Shire Council Perspective

An East Gippsland Shire Council Perspective

East Gippsland Shire Council monitor and validate the Vulnerable Persons Register, relying on other organisations to work with individuals at greater risk to be recorded for inclusion on the register. 'Verification' of individuals occurs through the recorded agency twice a year, April and October.

EGSC confirms that Crisis Works was used through the Black Summer Fires. By 'logging on', it also confirms digital identity so that future auditing can prove that the VPR was observed by who and when. There is also a requirement to maintain local lists of people who are at a greater risk, and these may be located at Bush Nursing Centres/Victoria Police and designed to complement the VPR and support local Victoria Police to coordinate evacuation.

Opportunities:

- ✅ Crisis works training is more consistent for all users, with passwords being kept in case of succession/shift changes within each organisation having access
- ✅ Better connection between users of information, including organisation within the Incident Control Centre (Bairnsdale) and local communities, using their own local information and lists

Challenges:

- ✅ Additions of individuals on the VPR rely on funded health organisations and service providers funded through the DFFH and its own Home Care provision team to provide EGSC with information about a client and their eligibility. Some individuals are not picked up due to independent service provision (through NDIS providers as an example)
- ✅ Crisis works system cannot download report filters by location, or information copied easily meaning precious time was required to manually download a record of individuals on the VPR, to be then provided to Victoria Police to follow up.
- ✅ Cross border arrangements – some members of the community seeking health support in southern New South Wales are missed due to the inconsistent obligation for 'recording' people who require greater support.
- ✅ With the addition of new funding streams like the NDIS (Federally funded), it has meant there are significant gaps in identification of assistance for those requiring it.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The application of the Vulnerable Person's Register in times of all hazards and emergencies appears to have been dependent on individual towns and communities during the Black Summer Fires, with each community looking out for and after their own. With the latest edition of the Vulnerable people in emergencies policy as 2018, the continuation of monitoring and evaluation of the VPE has yet to keep pace for emergencies and natural disasters in the past 5 years. It is important to continue to review and seek feedback to ensure that communities and towns can look after the residents and individuals who need greater support.

Recommendations

Recommendations

1   DFFH update the VPE policy as a matter of urgency, with an emphasis on further work undertaken to explore and support (financially and resources) more place based solutions for communities with feedback from communities themselves being obtained to help inform a new VPE policy. Further work to also be undertaken with more recent flood affected communities to collect lived experience of the application of the Vulnerable Persons Register in the northern part of the state.

2   That all recommendations made by VCOSS in 2018 with reference to the VPE policy Discussion Paper are supported by the CWANWG and considered by DFFH as soon as practical.

3   Training on All Hazards Emergency Preparedness is supported and delivered to those in greatest need. This approach is supported to be multi-dimensional, collaborating with existing organisations working in emergency preparedness to train those who work with individuals at greater risk; and working with individuals and their families/carers at greater risk directly through a number of programs currently being rolled out including training "Support the supporters", a Pilot Program in collaboration with State and Local Government as well as continuing support of the work done through the Children with Additional Needs Working Group.

4   Consistent monitoring and evaluation of the VPE continues at least yearly to reflect it's application through emergencies.

Recommendations

5 Better monitoring and reporting on the experiences of those applying the VPR within communities after major events to ensure any policy keeps pace with community expectations.

6 Consideration is given to ensure the definition of 'vulnerable' is tenure blind – meaning it should not matter who is supporting the individual and where the funding comes from. If a person is deemed at greater risk, the individual or family should be connected to supports.

7 Remove the emphasis of individuals at greater risk to embark on their own 'planning', enlist the support of community organisations to assist when emergency planning is needed, including those funded through NDIS or MyAged Care budgets (as examples). This could be included in assessment or other documents that agencies are required to keep on the individual.

8 A list of local facilities is made available to those working with people at greater risk to assist with their emergency preparedness planning. Often people who need to leave have nowhere to go and this can leave them in danger.

9 Crisisworks functionality to be reviewed and extra training provided (with succession and information sharing) to be considered as a part of training.

Recommendations

10

Cross border arrangements to be considered in any decision making and expectations of the individual or family made very clear in times of emergency.

11

Key information for each community is shared with place-based organisations with the permission of the individual/family to ensure everyone is accounted for during times of emergency, especially families/carers who have children with a disability. Many families/carers have a disability themselves and based on existing criteria, would likely qualify as a Vulnerable Person to opt in on the Vulnerable Persons Register.

12

Clarity regarding roles and responsibilities for preparedness.

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