



Australasian College for Emergency Medicine

34 Jeffcott Street West Melbourne Victoria 3003, Australia
+61 3 9320 0444 | admin@acem.org.au | ABN 76 009 090 715

17 March 2022

Emergency Management Victoria
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

By email: emergencyplanning@emv.vic.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Review of the Victorian Preparedness Framework and Goal

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; the College) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Victorian Preparedness Framework.

As you are aware, ACEM is the peak body for emergency medicine and has a vital interest in ensuring the highest standards of emergency medical care for all patients. ACEM is responsible for ensuring the advancement of emergency medicine in emergency departments (EDs) across Australia and New Zealand, the training of emergency physicians in these regions, and the accreditation of EDs for emergency medicine training.

A key concern for ACEM is managing the increasing likelihood of events like natural disasters and pandemics, both in and out of EDs and we commend the exploration of new initiatives to handle these events. However, we are concerned by the limited connections to existing health emergency planning in the current framework.

ACEM would like to see additional connections and detail regarding health responses in the scenarios and the specific core capability descriptors. There is the risk of creating additional long-term problems if healthcare is not included in each scenario.

Emergencies may activate many parts of the health system, however both EDs and ambulances are likely to play a significant role in ensuring fast and rapid medical responses in the community. For example, the Hazmat Emergency and Electricity Supply Disruption scenarios would involve health personnel managing the care of those exposed to the hazardous material and the elements. While in the Bushfire, Flood/Storm and Pandemic/Influenza scenarios, the possibility of large numbers of casualties may impact on the capacity of the health system to respond adequately. This extends to healthcare workers themselves being impacted by the disaster, as has recently been seen in the 2020 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

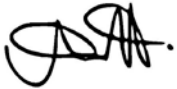
Both ambulances and EDs would be involved in patient retrieval, providing initial treatment and stabilising conditions. Ongoing monitoring of the situation would be pivotal in being able to measure the scale of impact and the possible effects that continue to influence the community in the medium term.

The College seeks to contribute to the collaborative implementation, and evaluation of changes of the Victorian Preparedness Framework. This includes the opportunity to incorporate the diverse expertise of our members, through their professional experiences and research they undertake. This will allow the creation of more informed changes that provide practical solutions.

It is essential that EMV monitor the impacts that these scenarios will have long-term on these communities and how management will involve the holistic care from disaster management services, emergency departments and paramedic services. ACEM believes we all have a role to play in emergency and disaster responses – including healthcare.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact James Gray, Manager, Policy and Advocacy, james.gray@acem.org.au; +61 0427 054 508.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Cubitt', with a small dot at the end.

Dr Mya Cubitt
Victoria Faculty Chair
ACEM