COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strategic Directions

2018-2023

Government of South Australia

SES RESCUE

INTRODUCTION

Our Vision

A reliable and trusted volunteer-based organisation building safe and resilient communities.

Our Purpose

To create safer communities by partnering with them to prepare for and respond to extreme heat, storm and flood events.

Values

The values represented within this body of work reflect those of the State Emergency Service and also align with the South Australian Government's Public Sector Values and Behaviour Framework.

The values inform our day-to-day activities and underpin collective approaches to sustaining a positive value based culture – our people, our way of working, our behaviours and our community value[1].

Rationale

With the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, there is a need for us to be at the forefront of building knowledge and capacity within the community to plan for and respond to these events. It is important to also recognise the nature of climate change and the impact this has had and will have in the future on the increased demand for services and the imperative for communities to be better informed, understand risk impacts and act locally. These strategic directions have been developed to provide a best practice guide for how we develop, implement and evaluate our core community engagement activities in a consistent and professional manner.

Through the implementation of these strategic directions we aim to:

- Create a common understanding of the role and function of community engagement in frontline services

- Clearly outline the direction, initiatives and priorities of community engagement for 2018-2023

- Identify and influence existing opportunities for effective community engagement

- Ensure research and evidence inform all engagement activities and materials

1   South Australian State Emergency Service Annual Business Plan 2016-2017

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

This strategic plan adopts the following Community Engagement principles that are closely aligned with the "National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework"[2]. The principles are reflected in the Community Engagement Model for Emergency Management (Page 5, Fig.1). With appropriate consultation and fostering ownership through participation, we aim to collaborate with communities to support them on their pathway towards empowerment. These principles serve as statements of good practice for use when planning effective community engagement.

Community centred

People are at the centre of preparing for an emergency, all members of the community understand and recognise their risk and play a key role in contributing to their own safety measures.

- Approaches are developed based on different types of community including communities of place, interest, belief and circumstance and the unique challenges they face

- An appreciation for and understanding of the risks different communities face

Local approaches

Getting to know our patch to grow our patch.

- Genuine flexible strategies are developed embracing community diversity, levels of awareness, preparedness and different perceptions of risk that empower local actions

- Existing community capabilities and challenges are identified and resources are developed and shared with all stakeholders.

Collaboration

Partner with community to support existing networks.

- Building and maintaining partnerships between local communities, agencies, government and businesses to promote shared leadership and shared action

- Local leaders and champions are listened to and supported respectfully

- Recognise the evolving and dynamic nature of communities reflected in on-going continuous improvement through the adaption, development and evaluation of core programs

2 National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework (2011)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is about working with communities to build community resilience. Disaster resilience requires a whole-of-society approach that focuses on strengthening capabilities.

We need to consider our approaches and the diversity of our audience in South Australia and cater for those people who are more at risk in emergencies. Tailoring communications, language and messaging is critical to ensure that people most at risk are not excluded[3].

There is also a need to be informed about national emerging trends and participate in community engagement professional support networks. These include professional associations, national research and policy groups, AFAC and other relevant networks as part of the larger community engagement network.

The current Community Engagement Unit's engagement activities have been one way interactions mainly focused on community events with promotional items and brochures given out.

Future Community Engagement activities will be measured in line with national best practice standards. There is a requirement to change the existing model to a strengths based one, as shown in figure 1 on page 5, that focuses on behavioural change and shared responsibility.

3   People at risk in emergencies framework for South Australia Australian Red Cross draft framework 2017
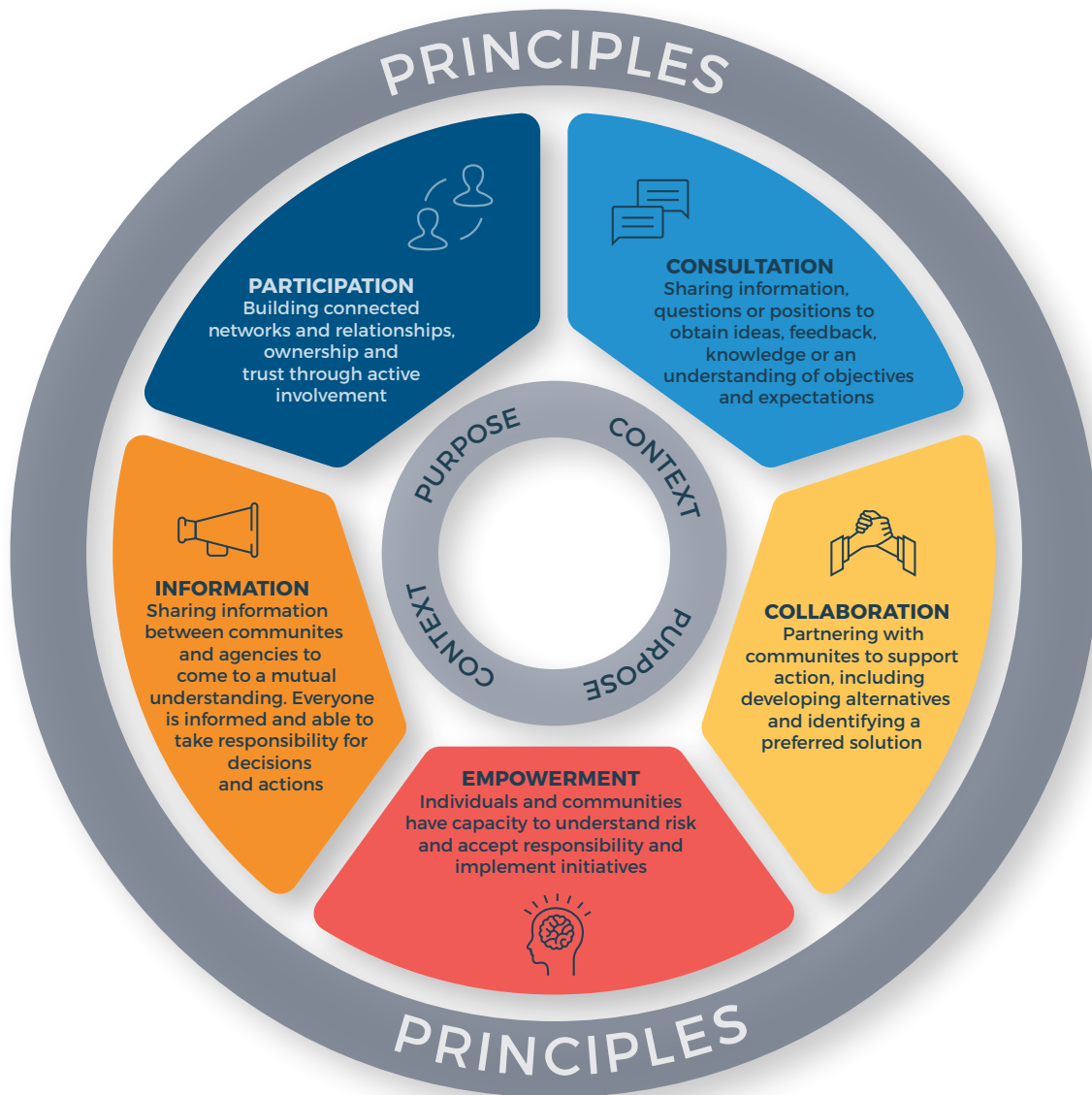
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Fig 1 Community Engagement Model for Emergency Management   National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

Within Emergency Services nationally there has been a shift towards the inclusion of community engagement as an integral part of frontline services. This has seen the development of community preparedness through disaster resilience building activities with the focus on sustainable behaviour change.

In developing this strategic plan we want to ensure our community engagement activities are responsive to community needs, coordinated, inclusive and focused to manage and reduce risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Participation Spectrum

The following IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is a tool to identify the different levels of engagement, the promise to the public at each participation level and what the public's role is within the engagement process.

For the first 12-18 months our level of engagement will be in the 'Inform' section of the spectrum through implementing the strategic direction to update and maintain our website content, design and accessibility. We aim to support individuals through a number of streamlined interactive resources to take specific actions that will reduce their risks.

We will develop a specialist highly skilled and trained staff and volunteer workforce. Our focus will be to work directly with the community where we will move through the spectrum from inform, to collaborate with the ultimate goal being empowerment. This is where the community has the knowledge, tools and linkages to implement sustainable planning and mitigation strategies.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	Sharing information with and between communities and agencies. Communication is coordinated, accessible and provided through a range of mediums	Sharing information to obtain ideas and feedback	Building connected networks and relationships, ownership and trust through active involvement with community	Partnering with communities to support action, including developing alternatives and identifying a preferred solution	Individuals and communities have capacity to understand risk, accept responsibility and implement initiatives
METHOD	Communication through public website, social media, forward facing materials, 132 500 number and community events. Key Messages are repeated	Social Media, community meetings, evaluation surveys	Community meetings and workshops where participation is possible for all members of the community	Meetings, sharing learnings, working groups for program development, project representation	Community action groups are formed that leads and owns process for preparedness, response and recovery

Fig 2 Adapted from the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework Handbook 4

KEY DELIVERABLES 2018-2023

There are five main deliverables for Community Engagement over the next five years.

The main areas are:

- Website and Social Media
- Community Engagement Volunteer Role Development
- Strategic Partnerships
- Community Engagement Programs and Training
- Public Facing Materials

These deliverables are in line with 'A changing approach to emergency management' where the approach is strengths based working in partnership with community through the various stages of the engagement spectrum. The objective is to empower the community to understand and take responsibility for the risks and implement initiatives. It also reflects the broader changes around embedding community engagement within the culture of emergency service organisations.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Objective

To provide the public with balanced, factual information and consistent messaging that is easily understood by the target audience to assist them to prepare for, respond to and recover from extreme heat, storm and flood events.

Overarching strategy

The Community Engagement headquarters team will work with the website and social media team to create processes and systems to ensure the website and social media posts are seen by the public as a reliable source of information. The information needs to be targeted, contemporary and engaging. It will build on State Emergency Service branding as a trusted, reliable source of information in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

As part of this, we will develop an implementation plan including a social media calendar to ensure the ongoing relevancy, consistency and branding of our website and social media.

Actions

- Develop a website and social media plan to assist with managing and utilising community engagement content and highlights the timing of posts, videos and other relevant media with clear calls to action

- Website System developed that ensures existing content can be easily updated , edited and new content added

- Social Media has specific seasonal core messaging promoted as well as advertising future community engagement events and links back to the website

- Publications including brochures, fact sheets, marketing materials will be available in a range of formats including, downloadable PDF's, social media posts, video's and other relevant media

KEY DELIVERABLES 2018-2023

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VOLUNTEER ROLE DEVELOPMENT

Objective

Development and promotion of the role of community engagement within units and the community through the retention and recruitment of volunteers with a range of engagement skills and abilities.

Overarching Strategy

Working in close partnership with the recruitment team we will strengthen and further develop the Community Engagement volunteer role. This includes targeted recruitment strategies, built in support mechanisms to maximise retention and using flexible volunteering models to attract a specific engagement skill set.

Internal and external promotion of the role and engagement activities will be facilitated in partnership with the media and communications team. The end result will be to raise the engagement profile so that it is recognised as a core component of frontline services.

Actions

- Community Engagement Unit provides logistical support to the agency through distribution of promotional materials to units

- Community Engagement Unit continues to promote the services through engagement activities at community group level e.g. Probus Clubs

- Create a Community Engagement Officer Position description that enables community engagement as a volunteer role to be embedded within each unit

- Develop and implement a retention and recruitment plan to facilitate channelling and processing volunteers in collaboration with the recruitment team

- Create and implement a communication plan both internally and externally to inform and promote the Community Engagement role, this includes the creation of volunteer online profiles to showcase the community engagement role within volunteering

- Review national volunteer models that can be applied within a community engagement context including flexible volunteering structure

- Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework

- Prioritise rollout of retention strategies with regional and urban units dependant on volunteer capability

National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework (2011)

KEY DELIVERABLES 2018-2023

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Objective

To identify a range of internal and external stakeholders that have emergency services expertise as well as community linkages around extreme weather and flood, and foster mutually beneficial sustainable partnerships.

Overarching Strategy

We will continue to build and maintain strategic partnerships with a variety of internal and external partners. Internal partners will be directly involved with the implementation of the key strategic deliverables including short term goals such as updating the website content or the longer term goals of developing sustainable recruitment strategies.

We will seek to establish a working partnership with external partners involved in building disaster resilience. Our aims are to utilise existing community networks, promote complimentary programs and messaging as well as identifying service gaps for future planning and program development.

Actions

- Identify and forge new connections with relevant stakeholders including Non-Government Organisations, Community Service organisations, Emergency Services, Local and State government and any other relevant organisations or agencies

- Investigate ways to work together with a complimentary program delivery and the sharing of existing networks

- Instigate partnerships with key researchers and subject experts focusing on flood, extreme heat and storm including the Bushfire & Natural Hazard CRC, Central Queensland University, Department of Environment & Water and other relevant research institutes

KEY DELIVERABLES 2018-2023

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND TRAINING

Objective

To create, adapt, deliver and review evidence based community engagement programs that meet national best practice standards in the areas of flood, storm and heat.

Overarching Strategy

The community Engagement headquarters team will formalise arrangements with interstate colleagues regarding the use of National preparedness programs including the volunteer community engagement training package.

We will adapt these flood and storm preparedness programs for delivery in South Australia. As the hazard leader for extreme heat we will also develop an extreme heat preparedness program focusing on at risk groups, delivery gaps and the general public. The materials will also include the adaption of the Community Engagement beginners and advanced training modules.

A plan will be developed prioritising the roll out of the program to volunteers recruited for or staff employed to fulfil the Community Engagement role.

Actions

- Develop a specialised extreme heat preparedness program focusing on at-risk communities where there is a gap in current program delivery

- Formalise an agreement with New South Wales State Emergency Service and Victoria State Emergency Service to access and adapt current best practise flood and storm programs for delivery in South Australia

- Review and adapt interstate training programs as well as sourcing specialised programs to develop a community engagement learning pathway for staff and volunteers with the training team

- Research and utilise information from the People at risk in Emergencies framework for South Australia and the State Disaster Resilience Strategy being developed by the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission

- Work with researchers from Central Queensland University and other emergency services to access or develop a system that enables our programs to be evaluated against national community resilience models

- Prepare budget bids for additional funding to gain increased resourcing to support the capability of this growth area including people, equipment, transport and technology

KEY DELIVERABLES 2018-2023

FORWARD FACING PUBLICATIONS

Objective

To produce an interactive suite of publications that informs, educates and assists the broader community with practical tools to prepare for and respond to an extreme weather or flood event.

Overarching strategy

We will develop our publications so they are contemporary, informative and easy to use in various formats including online print and PDF versions that are downloadable. We will work with creative agencies to update the look of the current core brochures in line with newer brochures and templates will be developed for future products.

The overall aim is to provide an engaging resource for the reader that promotes our brand and retains an identifiable consistency across all the brochures.

Actions

- Public forward facing materials are prioritised, and content and style is updated with a contemporary, clean and relevant style that meet accessibility guidelines with a content editor and a creative agency

- Investigate cultural and at-risk groups within our identified areas of engagement and translate our core materials into the key 'Languages other than English' groups and also into an Easy English format

- Updated materials to be uploaded to the website with new content in a timely manner

- Prepare printing quotes for selected materials and target distribution list

- Processes are developed that ensure materials have up to date information and are reviewed in a timely fashion

ESSENTIAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Internal Strategic Partnerships

The importance of the internal partnerships between community engagement, recruitment, training, operations, media and communications, website and social media are recognised as crucial to implementing these strategic directions.

- There are direct linkages between recruitment and building capacity to deliver engagement strategies through attracting and retaining volunteers

- Volunteers and staff are supported through a professional development training pathway that ensures they are able to deliver programs within a best practice framework

- Operations & Response area supports the role of community engagement within the units, assisting with the filtering through of core messaging, call to actions and information

- The website initially is one of the main forums we have to impact behaviour change through providing current engaging information that is easy to access. Social Media reflects our call to actions and promotes our activities to a wide audience and most importantly, engages the audience to interact with us directly through mediums such as Facebook

Effective Tools

We will develop a resource toolkit for community engagement delivery that is responsive to local concerns, can be tailored to a local situation and with the end goal of influencing the target audience into taking action. Additional resources will be sourced that enables community engagement to be delivered in various locations including rural and metropolitan areas.

Targeted Local Engagement

Our community engagement team will display a consistently high level of professional behaviour when engaging with the community. The team will be genuinely interested in what matters to the community as it is understood that building trust is a key component in influencing positive behaviour change. Local flood and heat maps will be utilised as well as data about at-risk communities which will contribute to identifying and prioritising high risk areas to implement appropriate community engagement approaches.

ESSENTIAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Enablers

Evidence based programs

We use current research and national best practice models, to implement programs that take people along a pathway of behavioural change. Some research will be available from other agencies that we can draw on, however programs for heat, which are specific to South Australia, will need to be developed locally in collaboration with relevant agencies.

Evaluation

We will establish a monitoring and evaluation framework that measures the effectiveness of our engagement activities. To demonstrate the feasibility of programs we will run pilot programs in areas focusing on a range of risks including geographic locations and those who because of circumstances or factors are more at risk in an emergency. Feedback will be gathered from the practitioners in the field. After an event we will partner with leading researchers to understand the drivers behind decisions that were made and identifying barriers or motivators to taking action. All of this data will inform and drive our continuous improvement processes.

Challenges

This strategy focuses on changing the way we do business within the community engagement space. This includes:

■ the expansion of a specialised role;

■ embedding community engagement in individual units

■ moving towards a measurable strengths based model

All of this will require a significant cultural change within the organisation.

> "
> If you always do what you've done, you'll always get what you've always got
> *Anonymous*

CONCLUSION

This body of work represents the Community Engagement Strategic directions over the next five year period with achievable short term goals and those that will have long term outcomes in building disaster resilience through a strengths based engagement model.

Effective engagement is recognised nationally as a central pillar in building disaster resilient communities and is increasingly recognised as an integral part of frontline services. These recommendations are focused on building capacity within the community engagement space.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework

The purpose of this Framework is to provide guidance for those working in emergency management to effectively engage with the community. It supports the strategy by outlining a shared understanding of community engagement values, principles and practice in Australia[1].

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

IAP2 is an international member association whose aim is to promote and improve the practice of community engagement[2]. The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is a tool that is used for planning community engagement strategies and activities. It assists you to choose the best fit for the community by considering needs, limitations, resources and what type of outcome you hope to achieve.

People at risk in emergencies Framework for South Australia

This framework was developed by Red Cross in conjunction with government, non-government organisations, emergency service organisations, community service organisations, agencies and advocates and is currently out for consultation. It is a strengths based document intended to be used by organisations and community to build disaster resilience with clients who are more at risk in emergencies.

Community Engagement Strengths based model

The strengths based model represents a shift in thinking away from a deficit model that only views people's limitations to one that recognises that all people have knowledge, capabilities and skills. The focus is on viewing situations realistically, encouraging autonomy and seeking opportunities to complement and support peoples existing capacities and strengths in building preparedness and community resilience.

Disaster Resilience

This is the capacity of communities to prepare for, absorb and recover from emergencies and to learn, adapt and transform in ways that enhance these capacities in the face of future events[3].

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1   Community Engagement Framework Handbook 6
2   www.iap2.org/au/About-us, www.iap2.org.au/Resources/IAP2-Published-Resources
3   www.bnhcrc.com.au/file/6043/download?token=JFFwtsP7

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This strategy has linkages with the following documents:

- South Australian State emergency Service Annual Business Plan 2016-2017

- National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Community Engagement Framework Handbook 6

- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

- South Australian State Emergency Services Community Resilience Strategic Plan 2018-2020

- SAFECOM Communications and Engagement Framework draft (2018)

Further reading that has informed these strategic directions:

Brown Hill Keswick Creek Flood Response State Emergency Services (2015)

People at risk in emergencies framework for South Australia (2018)

Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management (2017)

VICSES Community Resilience Strategy (2016-2019)

Towards a resilient state – The South Australian Government's Climate Adaption

Action Plan (2015)

State Emergency Management Plan

Western Adelaide Urban Heat Mapping Project (August 2017)

The economic cost of the social impact of natural disasters Deloitte Access Economics (2016)

NSW State Emergency Services Strategic plan (2016-2021)

Community Engagement Strategic Directions NSW Rural Fire Service (2017-2021)

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