

VCC Emergencies Ministry

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

2024 Quarter 1 Report

Submitted on: 2 April 2024



Executive Summary

Victorian Council of Churches - Emergencies Ministry (VCCEM) continues to be the lead agency for Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Emotional Spiritual Care (ESC) in Victoria, supporting disaster and emergency affected communities, Emergency Management Agencies, Local Government municipalities (LGA) and the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH).

In Quarter 1 2024 VCCEM met all Key Performance Indicators, were involved in 27 incidents, and supported 1,530 members of the community that had been affected by a crisis. Training plans were reduced as per normal summer season operations.

As we come out of summer season, we continue to support communities that have been recently impacted by fires, floods, and storms. Each year VCCEM is operationally more prepared than previous years with an increase in the number of Operational Commanders, Emergency Operations Volunteers, and general availability. Our arrangements with local government, DFFH, ERV and EMV are strong, tested, and reliable heading into the future. We are confident that we will have the capability and capacity, together with the necessary operational arrangements to respond to any request for service.

Edmund Murphy

Chief Executive Officer

Victorian Council of Churches - Emergencies Ministry

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1. Key Performance Indicators

1. Participation in key strategic processes at a State, Regional and Local level through:
 - a) Attendance at State Emergency Relief Group meetings and Recovery meetings
 - b) Attendance at Regional Emergency Management meetings
 - c) Attendance at Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee's (or equivalent)
2. Provide statewide capability and capacity for the provision of psychological first aid, personal support, and emotional spiritual care.
3. Respond in a timely manner to local government and DFFH request for service as per below:
 - a) Metropolitan Region - within 1 – 1.5 hrs from callout
 - b) Rural Region - within 1 – 3 hours from callout
4. Provide appropriate training for volunteers including:
 - a) Psychological First Aid
 - b) Personal Support
 - c) Emotional Spiritual Care
 - d) Other training as deemed necessary
5. Provide quarterly reports that include:
 - a) Disaster specific – number and location of events
 - b) Capability and capacity – local, regional, and state capacity including any identified gaps
 - c) Training reports – numbers and skills area
 - d) Details of which MEMPs included in
6. Further KPI's related to the Chief Operations Officer:
 - a) Coordinate VCCEM responses to request for service
 - b) Liaise with key stakeholders
 - c) Attend relevant emergency management planning meetings

2. Operations

2.1 Incidents for Reporting Period Q1

January 2024:

1. South Gippsland Shire flooding – January 2024
2. Campaspe/Rochester flooding
3. Baw Baw Shire flooding
4. Macedon Ranges Flooding
5. Bendigo Shire Flood Pop Up Recovery Centres
6. Bendigo Shire and surrounds Flooding Secondary Impact Assessments
7. Murrindindi Shire Secondary Impact Assessments
8. House Fire – Banyule (Standby)
9. House Fire – Bendigo

February 2024:

1. Bendigo and surrounds Flooding – Recovery pop ups
2. Moonee Valley October 2022 outreach check ins
3. Grampians Fires – Stawell ERC (Northern Grampians)
4. Storm event – Cardinia Shire
5. Mt Alexander phone outreach
6. Storm event – South Gippsland Shire
7. Storm event – Baw Baw Shire
8. Bayindeen/Rocky Rd Fire – Beaufort area – Ballarat ERC
9. Derell Fire – ERC
10. Wellington Shire House Fire

March 2024:

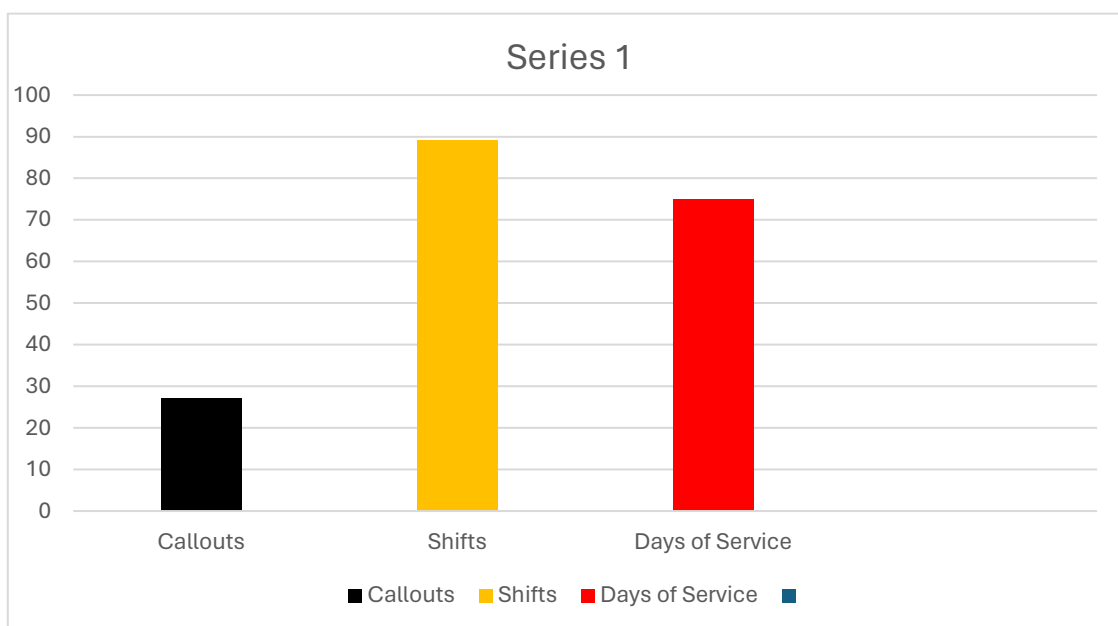
1. Pyrenees Shire Council Debrief

2. Belgrave Homicide – Victoria Police
3. Derell Fire – Community BBQ
4. Bayindeen/Rocky Rd Fire – Secondary Impact Assessments, Pyrenees Shire
5. Network Outage review – Mirboo North
6. House Fires in March – Kingston City council, City of Greater Bendigo
7. Vehicle into House - Frankston City Council
8. Community Events: VCCEM teams attended the Pangerang Neighbourhood House emergency services event, and also the Whittlesea Community festival.

2.2. Activations - Reporting Period Q1

VCC Emergencies Ministry consistently provides quality, timely support to communities affected by emergencies at the request from authorised agencies. An interesting observation statewide is that VCC EM is being asked by more and more municipalities to respond to non-major emergencies as agencies recognise the capability and capacity of our organisation.

In Q1, VCCEM Volunteers supported 1,530 members of the community that had been affected by a crisis.



(1 Jan – 31 March 2024)

3. Capability Data

3.1 Training

Each year, VCCEM hosts face-to-face **Core Training** in all regions across the state to increase our volunteer capability and capacity, and to continue to upskill our current volunteer force. Additionally, VCCEM also hosts online **Core Training** for new and existing volunteers followed by a two-hour face-to-face component thereafter.

VCCEM offers a reduced training schedule during fire danger periods to prioritise operational preparedness and capability. VCCEM also hosts several other training programs to LGAs such as the **Introduction to Personal Support** and **Self-Care in the Workplace** programs.

In the past 12 months, VCCEM has facilitated 14 Core Training sessions with 161 participants (49 new volunteers and 112 refreshers).



3.2 Volunteer Force

3.2.1 Role of the VCC EM Regional Coordinator:

- a) Attend and contribute at REMPC or subcommittee as regionally determined;
- b) Recruit and support Area Coordinators for each Municipality in that region;
- c) Assist with promotion of VCC EM regionally;
- d) Support the Area Coordination with a local response to emergencies.

3.2.2 Role of the VCC EM Area Coordinator:

- a) Attend the Local Government MEMPC as the VCC EM representative;
- b) Promote VCC EM through local faith communities, recruit and support local volunteers;
- c) Coordinate local response to emergencies and assist with broader call to action when necessary.

3.2.3 Volunteer Skills Audit:

Auditing began in 2011 and is systematic in recruitment since then. Capturing data retrospectively is a little more challenging. This information is what we know from 2011 data onwards.

Training / Qualifications	Number of Volunteers (cumulative)
Grief and Loss	252
CISM	45
CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education)	188
Cert IV Chaplaincy	70
EMLO	24
AIIMS	37
Intro to Relief and Recovery Centres	21
Mental Health Training	169
DFFH Personal Support Training	42
Other Chaplaincy (Health, Aged Care, Sports)	198

** Some volunteers have training in more than 1 area **

Additionally, at least three quarters of our total volunteer force bring substantial theological / pastoral / counselling training, formation, and experience. Therefore, 65% of our workforce have formal qualifications and skills in mental health and emergency management capabilities, with the other 35% with non-formal training, skills, and experience in pastoral care.

65%

Formally qualified in pre-existing suitable skills for the role performed.

35%

Non formal training, skills and experience in Pastoral Care.



MULTI-FAITH CHAPLAINCY

Multi-faith Chaplaincy Capacity

Buddhist	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	Brahma Kumaris	Other (Spiritualist)
43	27	4	12	9	8

10 Major Faith Groups

57 Languages

26 Cultural Groups

4. Networking

4.1. Victoria Police

Up until January 2024, VCC EM attended the Victorian Police Academy to

inform and educate members upgrading their rank in emergency management arrangements, specifically VCC EM's according to the arrangements. Victoria Police is currently revising this program, and VCC EM hopes to continue to contribute to this work.



4.2. Melbourne Tullamarine Airport

The Department of Family Fairness and Housing North-West Division continues to

take a role in the development of the relief and recovery arrangements for the airport under the Airport Emergency Plan. An airport emergency exercise in 2023 demonstrated that the relief and recovery sub plan is effective at the delivery of quality, timely support to the airport.



4.3. Macedon Ranges Hot Day Out Protocol

This MoU has not yet been activated for 2024.



4.4. National Networking Strategy

The VCCEM CEO and COO are members of the Australian Volunteer Emergency Chaplaincy Alliance (AVECA). This group meets twice a year building national policy and working together to build a national capability and capacity. The NSW branch of AVECA activated VCC Emergencies Ministry to support them with volunteers to the Lismore Floods in 2022.

5. Memorandums of Understanding

1. **Ambulance Victoria (AV)** - VCCEM has established a Service-Level Agreement (SLA) with Ambulance Victoria whereby VCC EM has been contracted by Ambulance Victoria to support

the capability and capacity of AV in the provision of Volunteer Chaplains across the State of Victoria. Currently, VCC EM has 23 Ambulance Victoria Volunteer Chaplains supporting paramedics and corporate staff in AV.

2. **The Salvation Army (TSA)** – VCCEM has established an MoU with TSA in relation to the provision of personal support in emergencies and disasters. It has been agreed that the coordination of chaplains to disasters would be coordinated by the VCCEM to avoid the convergence issues of the 2009 Black Saturday Fires.
3. **Australian Red Cross (ARC)** – VCCEM has an MoU with ARC regarding the provision of Personal Support.
4. **Chaplaincy Australia (CA)** – CA operate in Victoria and have agreed to cooperate with and work under the coordination of the VCCEM in emergencies.
5. **Baptcare** – Baptcare Victoria and Tasmania are working with VCCEM in supporting affected communities experiencing disasters. Baptcare have 20 chaplains in Victoria and Tasmania who are trained by VCCEM. In an emergency event and where Baptcare are required to evacuate aged care facilities, VCCEM will work with Baptcare in the provision of trained volunteers.
6. **Anglicare Hume Region** – 20+ Anglicare staff in Wangaratta have been trained by VCCEM. Many were deployed during the current flood crisis in North-East Victoria under the coordination of the VCCEM. Anglicare Hume have agreed to work with the VCCEM in disaster response and recovery.
7. **Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)** – the ICV are working closely with the VCC to grow Muslim Chaplains and Personal Support Workers, due to increased demand.

8. **Bicycle Network Victoria (BNV)** – VCCEM has an MoU with BNV to provide support where needed during and after critical incidents. BNV have activated VCCEM several times in recent years for accidents at cycling events resulting in serious injury or death.

9. **Municipal Collaboration Projects** - VCCEM have been working with the following regional and municipal collaborations:
 - North-West Metro Collaboration of 14 Councils
 - East-Metro Collaborations of 7 Councils
 - Gippsland Collaboration
 - Loddon Mallee Collaboration