Needs assessment and psychosocial support after emergencies

A multi-agency outreach framework and guidelines

Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the consultation group made up of representatives of the Country Fire Authority (CFA), the Municipal Association of Victoria, representatives of Cardinia, Mount Alexander, Nillumbik, Pyrenees, Whittlesea and Yarra Ranges Local Government Authorities, Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry, the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, (DELWP), the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Victorian Red Cross Emergency Services team, VICSES and Victoria Police, as well as to many who shared their personal stories - all of which have highlighted the need for psychosocial support in times of emergency. Feedback and commentary was also provided by a range of stakeholders, in particular from members of the North and West Metro Collaboration.

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Acronyms

APS	Australian Psychological Society
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
IIA	Initial Impact Assessment
LGA	Local Government Authority
NDRRA	Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MFB	Metropolitan Fire Brigade
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
PFA	Psychological First Aid
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service
VicPol	Victoria Police
VCCEM	Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry
WHO	World Health Organisation

Message from the Emergency Management Commissioner

Emergencies are an increasingly familiar part of life in Victoria, and outreach visits to those affected are just one way of ensuring that people get access to the support they need when they most need it. Visits to people in their homes and businesses ensure that no one misses out on services and information available after an emergency, and provide an avenue for sharing stories, highlighting community need and promoting opportunities to connect with neighbours. We've seen a range of large scale emergencies in Victoria over the past decades and an increasing number of agencies involved in supporting communities after those events. Multiple visits from a range of agencies collecting a variety of information can compound the impacts of the event itself and may adversely affect an individual or family's recovery – highlighting the need for effective coordination and collaboration.

This Natural Disaster Resilience Grant funded framework and associated guidelines will help all agencies involved in emergency management to ensure that outreach visits after emergencies are coordinated and holistic. The importance of planning visits well, taking into account the psychosocial needs of communities after emergencies, and ensuring that information collected is used to inform the delivery of relevant, timely and appropriate relief and recovery services are highlighted.

This project has been a great demonstration of collaborative working in itself, with Australian Red Cross and Emergency Management Victoria working together to consult a range of community, emergency and government agencies with experience in outreach, in the development of the framework and guidelines. This piece of work aligns with Victoria's Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015 – 2018, addressing in particular the need to develop shared responsibility and self reliance to strengthen resilience, and to support people and systems to deliver emergency services in an integrated and coordinated way.

I look forward to seeing these guidelines used by all agencies to promote a collaborative approach to outreach visits after emergencies. Only with coordination and cooperation can we ensure that we are providing Victorians with effective, timely and relevant support to encourage social connectedness, build resilience and strengthen our communities.

Craig Lapsley, Emergency Management Commissioner, Victoria

Message from Red Cross

Australian Red Cross has over 100 years experience of supporting Victorians after emergencies. Through that experience and our work across the country and internationally, we know that the most positive outcomes for communities occur when we take a collaborative approach, and acknowledge the inherent strengths and capabilities in those we work with.

After the devastating 2009 Victorian Bushfires, in working with our local partners, it became clear that many people were not accessing the services they were entitled to, for a range of reasons: no transport; a sense of not being 'worthy' of assistance; limited understanding of entitlements. We worked with those local partners to arrange home visits to identify needs and to provide psychosocial support – a listening ear, access to information and an opportunity to connect with local services and their own community. These visits helped people to feel connected and well informed about the supports available to them, and to help them to make decisions to drive their own recovery.

Since 2009, we have worked closely with partners including local government, community groups, not for profit organisations and response agencies to visit people in their homes after a range of events like the 2010 Melbourne hailstorm, 2011 Victorian floods, 2013 Hazelwood Mine Fire and a number of emergencies of differing scale in between. We know that early psychosocial support and assessment of need is critical to people's recovery and that the more effectively and efficiently agencies can work together to achieve this, the more able we are to support community recovery.

Strong relationships with our community, emergency services and government partners are crucial to Red Cross' ability to deliver on our vision of improving the lives of the most vulnerable. We thank our collaborators for your contribution to this piece of work, and Emergency Management Victoria for sponsoring the project and as a key partner in our work with communities. We look forward to our ongoing collaboration across the sector to support safer and more resilient communities in Victoria.

Penny Harrison, Victorian Executive Director, Australian Red Cross

Table of contents

Part One
Outreach Framework

This section provides the background and context for a coordinated, consistent, holistic, multi-agency approach to outreach in Victoria.

1

Natural and technological disasters commonly occur in Australia. Events can happen at any time, in any place, leaving a new and changing environment to adapt to. They also create new environments for emergency service providers and policy-makers to respond to.

Emergency management agencies continually learn from local, regional and international disaster events. The experience, understanding and skills gained across the sector in the last decade have improved the ways we work with communities to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Perhaps two of the biggest recent lessons in Victoria include recognising the need for effective interagency coordination and an emphasis on the benefits of delivering appropriate psychosocial support in both the immediate aftermath of an event and the long term stages of recovery.

Most people recover after disasters by drawing on their own strengths and the support of others, and most will gradually rebuild their lives and achieve a sense of wellbeing again.[1] However, the need for timely psychosocial support from appropriate agencies after an emergency is also widely acknowledged. Neil Comrie's 2010 Victorian Flood Review[2] and the Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper[3] address this need with specific reference to outreach:

> *There is a need for a coordinated, consistent, holistic approach to outreach visits to ensure that those affected, regardless of the type of emergency, receive timely and relevant psychosocial support and that relief and recovery services are targeted appropriately.*[4]

What is outreach?

Outreach is a service-delivery method that can be used to provide psychosocial support to people after emergencies and to carry out needs assessments. It occurs in the broader context and structures of relief and recovery.

There are three key aims of outreach:

1. Provision of psychosocial support.
2. Information collection and distribution (two-way communication):
    - assessment of relief/recovery needs
    - general conversation and observation
    - distribution of timely information about relevant local services
3. Referrals to local support services.[6]

Outreach ideally occurs within the first two weeks of an emergency to ensure that people have access to early psychosocial support and assessment of their needs so agencies are able to tailor their services effectively.[7]

1 Beyond Blue, Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Health, ACGB and Australian Red Cross, Looking After Yourself and Your Family After A Disaster, p3.
2 Comrie, N, Review of the 2010-11 Flood Warnings and Response, 2011, p175.
3 Victorian Emergency Management, Reform White Paper, 2012, p14.
4 Victorian Emergency Management, Reform White Paper, 2012, p14.
5 Victorian Department of Human Services and Australian Red Cross, Emergency Relief Handbook, 2013, p78.
6 Victorian Department of Human Services and Australian Red Cross, Emergency Relief Handbook, 2013, p78.
7 Victorian Department of Human Services and Australian Red Cross, Emergency Relief Handbook, 2013, p78.

Trained and briefed personnel from government, non-government, community or other relevant organisations conduct visits to properties for face-to-face conversations with affected people.

Outreach involves visiting people in their homes or properties, temporary accommodation or businesses and may include attending community events or having conversations over the phone. This framework and the accompanying guidelines do not address outreach at community events or via phone. While the focus of this document is on visits to affected people in their homes, temporary accommodation or businesses, it is recommended that the principles of the framework are applied to outreach at community events or over the phone, where relevant.

Outreach visits are conducted in order to:

- Collect critical information to address urgent needs.
- Promote resilience and decision making in individuals and communities.
- Validate people's experience and help people feel emotionally supported.
- Inform people about relevant services.
- Encourage people to be socially connected.
- Identify people that need additional support.
- Identify service gaps.
- Foster positive relations between agencies and affected communities.[8]

Outreach is for all emergency-affected people, but especially those who:

- Have no knowledge of services or how to access them.
- Are isolated or have limited access to transport.
- Believe they are not entitled to services or do not think they need services.
- Are unable to readily access relief centres or community meetings.[9]

Outreach personnel visit damaged properties on Elcho Island, NT, 2015.
Source: Australian Red Cross

8 Victorian Department of Human Services and Australian Red Cross, Emergency Relief Handbook, 2013, p78.
9 Victorian Department of Human Services and Australian Red Cross, Emergency Relief Handbook, 2013, p78.

This framework

Funded through the Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme, this framework aims to improve the way outreach activities are conducted in the early and longer term stages of recovery.

It is intended for use by people responsible for planning and delivering outreach. This may include but is not limited to: local government workers, community members or leaders, relevant Recovery Committee Members, EMV, DEDJTR, DHHS, DELWP, CFA, MFB, SES, VicPol, VCCEM, Red Cross and other non-government organisations. While this document has been developed for agencies, plans and activities in the Victorian emergency services sector, it may be used to help improve outreach operations in other Australian states and territories, and internationally.

This framework acknowledges the themes and priorities of the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018[10], in particular:

- Encouraging and drawing on common service policy, practices, principles, workflows and platforms to develop principles and standards that guide service delivery approaches across all hazards.
- Encouraging and drawing on existing common definitions in terminology and data.[11]

Part One provides context for the framework. Part Two contains guidelines to support the delivery of effective, coordinated outreach.

Improving outreach in Victoria – coordination and psychosocial support

To date, outreach in Victoria has presented both benefits and challenges. While affected communities overwhelmingly respond positively to outreach services, there is room for improvement.

Following a number of natural disasters in Victoria, including the 2009 bushfires and 2011 floods, the Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper made a series of recommendations on how to improve outreach, including:

> *strengthening partnerships with the Australian Red Cross, the not-for profit sector, community groups and private sectors to…better plan and develop a holistic approach to deliver emergency relief and recovery services which operate across the social, built, economic and environmental arenas.*[12]

Further, the White Paper sets a task, to review Victoria's outreach model, so it:

> *a) is informed by lessons learnt from the multidisciplinary outreach teams used in New Zealand after the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake, and b) facilitates a coordinated and efficient response to the post emergency needs of people affected by a disaster.*[13]

11 Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018, 2015, p23.
12 Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper, 2012, p14.
13 Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper, 2012, p14.

Similarly, the Victorian Floods Review 2010-11 proposed a review of the way early outreach occurs to ensure a consistent approach regardless of who delivers the service[14]. This is because across the state (and the nation, which may be relevant when interstate agencies assist in larger scale events) there are multiple organisations providing outreach, thus creating a need for a planned, coordinated approach.

A multi-agency approach to outreach ensures a) that those affected have timely and concurrent access to psychosocial support from trained personnel and b) an accurate assessment of impact and need is provided to relevant parties *at the same time.* The benefits of this kind of coordination range from reducing activity duplication (thereby freeing up resources in the aftermath of a disaster) to allowing the broader recovery system to reach and assist more people in need.[15]

The Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018 guides agencies to define emergency management roles and responsibilities across all tiers of government, non-government organisations, agencies, business and the community and make sure they are understood by all involved.[16] The White Paper spoke directly of the necessity for increased cooperation between government and agencies:

> *to enable flexible and networked responses that better support the community and place greater emphasis on mitigating hazards and building community resilience.*[17]

The aforementioned reviews found that, in the past, agencies have missed opportunities to adopt holistic approaches to building resilience by incorporating psychosocial support in outreach. This framework places psychosocial support firmly at the centre of outreach operations while enhancing opportunities for inter-agency coordination.

In summary, the recommendations from the Comrie Report, the White Paper and the working group that developed this framework can be outlined in the following suggestions. It is recommended that future outreach operations in Victoria:

- Adopt a more holistic approach to supporting affected persons and communities and gather information in early outreach.
- Always involve psychosocial provisions in the form of personal support or Psychological First Aid (PFA).
- Are planned and delivered via the coordinated efforts of multiple agencies.
- Are planned and operated under the agreement from all agencies and departments that psychosocial support and the provision of PFA is a primary purpose of outreach.
- Follow the agreed framework and guidelines of this document.

14 Comrie, N, Review of the 2010-11 Flood Warnings and Response, 2011, p80.
15 Moore, et al. 2003 cited in Kehler's Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance, 2004, p1.
16 Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018, 2015, p19.
17 Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper, 2012, p1.

Outreach and the relationship to impact assessment

It is important to differentiate the focus of this framework and guidelines from impact assessment activities conducted after an emergency event.

The Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV)[18] outlines three types of emergency impact assessments that occur during different stages of relief and recovery:

- Initial Impact Assessment (IIA), sometimes called a Rapid Impact Assessment
- Secondary Impact Assessment
- Post-emergency or longer term assessment.

When planning outreach, the data from an IIA is key in determining the scope and aims of an outreach operation, and is a vital source of intelligence regarding logistics and safety.

An IIA does not involve visits or conversations with affected people. Secondary and post emergency assessments involve conversations with those affected.

Outreach may provide a 'vehicle' to conduct secondary and post-emergency assessments, or it may operate without an assessment function (and focus primarily on psychosocial support).

It is recommended that **any** agency or organisation involved in conducting outreach – including those whose primary focus may not usually involve health or human services - use this framework as a guide when planning and delivering any outreach operation.

For more information on impact assessment, please refer to Emergency Management Victoria's (EMV) Impact Assessment Guidelines.

18 Emergency Management Victoria, EMMV, 2014, Part 3, p17.

Outreach and the National Principles for Disaster Recovery

The National Principles for Disaster Recovery in Australia are a series of six key concepts. They are considered central to successful recovery:

- Understanding the **context.**
- Recognising **complexity.**
- Using **community**-led approaches.
- Ensuring **coordination** of all activities.
- Employing effective **communication.**
- Acknowledging and building **capacity.**[19]

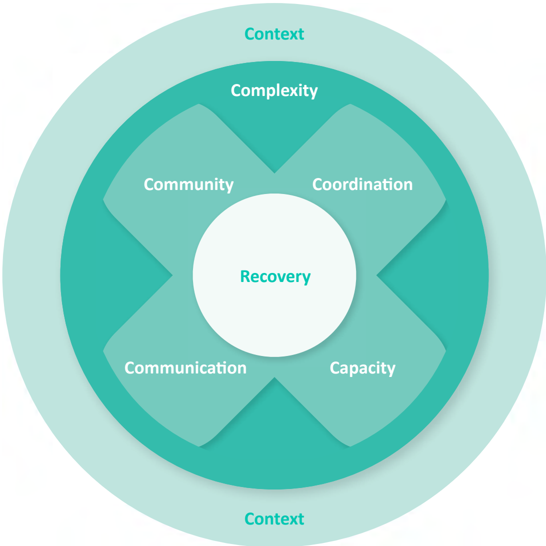


Figure 1 shows the relationship between the six principles, with context and complexity being foundation factors of recovery.[20]

The principles are guidelines of good practice for organisations and individuals and should underpin planning and operations within local, state and national emergency management frameworks.[21]

Outreach is most effective when it is embedded within a broader recovery structure. This larger structure involves a variety of organisations and individuals across government, non-government and the community.

Planning outreach must involve careful consideration of the context and complexity of the impacted area and population. Where possible, outreach should incorporate community input. It should always respect existing community capabilities and present opportunities to build capacity. Effective communication is required at all stages of outreach operations.

For more information on the principles, visit [The Australian Government's Department of Social Services.]

19 Australian Government, CDSMAC, 2009, National Principles for Disaster Recovery, brochure, https://www.ag.gov.au/EmergencyManagement/Respond-and-recover/Documents/national-principles-for-disaster-recovery.pdf
20 Original design by Alter.
21 Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2, p21.

Psychosocial considerations in outreach

It is important to understand the consequences of a disaster upon the psychosocial infrastructure of communities because psychosocial recovery is the foundation for enabling the progression of recovery in all aspects of the community, including the economic, natural and built environments.[23]

Positive consequences can be enhanced and negative consequences avoided or at least alleviated by an effective recovery effort and the sound coordination of response and recovery.[24]

Impacts on the psychosocial environment may be tangible or intangible and include:

- A range of emotional, cognitive (thinking), physical (health), spiritual and behavioural reactions to the events.
- Loss or disruption to peoples' lives, on individual and group levels.
- Loss or disruption to social connections and social infrastructure.
- The disappearance of much of what was once considered routine.
- Loss of familiar communication networks.
- Social structures such as faith and cultural groups, educational facilities, networks and relationships, childcare, service groups, sport clubs, Rotary and Lions groups, non-government organisations, neighbourhood centres and health facilities can all be disrupted.[25]

We know that most people recover well on their own or with help of friends and family. **Resilience is the norm** and the majority of the affected population will continue to conduct their lives without significant health problems. Approximately 80% of the broader population will not experience prolonged distress or develop significant health problems.[26] The path of recovery, however, is not smooth, and setbacks are part of normal recovery.[27] It is imperative for outreach operations, delivered at any time after an emergency event, to always involve psychosocial support to assist people as they move through the peaks and troughs of their personal recovery.

Psychosocial refers to the psychological and social aspects of our lives.

Psychological first aid (PFA) is an approach to helping people affected by an emergency, disaster or traumatic event. It includes basic principles of support to promote natural recovery.

This involves helping people to feel safe, connected to others, calm and hopeful, access physical, emotional and social support, and feel able to help themselves.[22]

Check out the psychosocial resources for workers and affected people at the back of this document.

22 APS and Australian Red Cross, PFA – An Australian Guide, 2013, p5.
23 Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2, p83.
24 Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2, p83.
25 Australian Red Cross, Community Recovery Information Series (CRIS), 2012, p46.
26 Van Ommeren, M, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidance on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings: A paper on Public Health Pre-Deployment Training, 2006.
27 Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2, p90.

Occasionally, the processes and activities of the broader recovery system can cause distress for those affected. Tasks such as reconnecting electricity, phone and internet services, navigating insurance or permit applications, interacting with government and non-government groups, or completing paperwork can become very cumbersome, complex and stressful for affected people. The presence of media, recovery agencies and other helpers in one's community may create an unfamiliar or hectic atmosphere. These are sometimes called secondary stressors - first, people experience a negative event, which is then followed by a negative experience with the systems or mechanisms responding to the event.

It is critical that outreach does not cause secondary stress. Agencies should:

- Always adopt a multi-agency approach to avoid numerous groups conducting multiple, unnecessary visits that may encroach on people's privacy.
- Ensure efficient and accurate daily reporting; this is especially important for referrals.
- Never make assurances or set expectations that might not be met.
- Ensure outreach personnel are adequately trained and briefed.
- Ensure appropriate sensitivity around questioning or enquiring.
- Ensure outreach provides up-to-date, consistent messaging.

The guidelines in Part Two are designed to help agencies avoid inflicting secondary stressors on people recovering from emergencies.

Before, during and after outreach activities, coordinating agencies must protect the psychosocial interests of those people who receive an outreach visit and for those people who conduct outreach operations.

For more information on supporting outreach workers, see pages 47 and 49.

"Great emphasis is often given to meeting immediate physical and material needs, at the expense of self-care and long-term planning."[28]

Outreach and delivery of PFA

Preparing personnel to deliver PFA in the field is paramount. The more that is known about the situation, and the better prepared a person is psychologically, the more effective their support will be. Prior to using PFA in the field, personnel should:

- Learn or be briefed about the emergency.
- Learn or be briefed about available services and supports.
- Learn or be briefed about safety, access and security concerns.
- Consider their physical and mental preparedness.[29]
- Be aware of the community context.

28 Victorian Department of Human Services, Psychosocial support: A framework for emergencies, 2014, p3.
29 WHO, War Trauma Foundation, and World Vision International, 2011, PFA: Guide for field workers.

Through face-to-face conversations, outreach personnel can employ the five elements of PFA[30] to guide the tone of an outreach visit.

Figure 2 outlines the five elements of PFA, which can be used to guide conversations during outreach visits.[31]

The elements of PFA are helpful reminders for personnel to ensure their presence and input during an exchange with affected residents remains positive, while gently and appropriately supporting recovery. Personnel might use a combination of spoken communication and body language to do this. They can provide information or referral paths to encourage an overall sense of calm, connectedness, self-efficacy, hope and safety.

Similarly, the PFA elements help inform the overall discourse around outreach and should guide the way organisations talk about, plan and conduct outreach activities.

This framework strongly recommends that any staff and personnel responsible for planning and providing outreach services, including those in senior and influential decision-making roles, complete PFA training. For more information about training see page 49. Read the PFA guidelines published by the Australian Psychological Society and Red Cross (linked in the Resource Table of this document).

Video: how outreach helped a resident and business owner in her recovery from major flooding.

30 Hobfoll et al. 2007, 'Five essential elements of immediate and mid-term mass trauma intervention: empirical evidence', Psychiatry, Vol. 70, p283-315.

31 Original design by Alter.

Outreach and the 'Propeller' model

The Propeller model, developed by the Australian Emergency Management Institute, illustrates four categories or environments to help define the different impacts of disaster on a community and the types of services needed to support recovery. The environments are social (or psychosocial), built, economic and natural.[32]

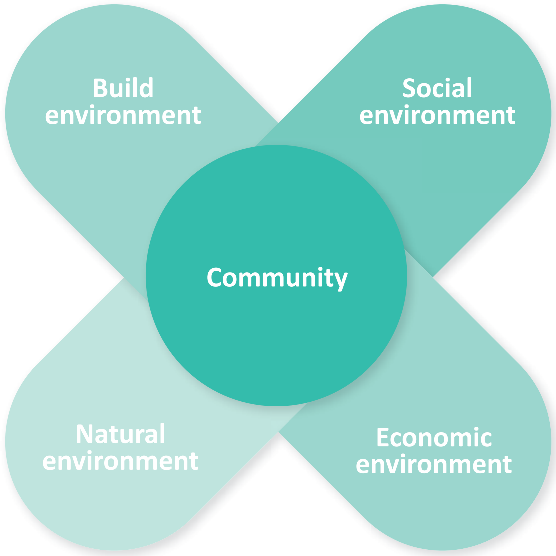


Figure 3. Community is at the centre of the four environments of the Propeller model.[33]

This model informs the functional responsibilities of governments and service providers. Local or regional agencies sometimes use these four areas to establish Recovery Committee structures. In reality the environments overlap.[34]

This model shows that outreach is more than an opportunity to observe impacts and collate information about the social environment. As they visit impacted towns and streets and conduct conversations with affected people, outreach teams can gather knowledge about effects on the natural, built and economic environments and provide information about the progress of recovery efforts pertaining to specific environments.

For example, in instances where local industry may have suffered major damage or disruption, outreach might facilitate dialogue with community members to understand the impact on the economic environment (i.e. how local employees and suppliers are coping financially and psychosocially) and ensure appropriate information and services are provided. Or, regarding the natural environment, residents might be asked about dangerous trees or polluted waterways, as well as being invited to participate in community meetings for recovery planning.

As the figure depicts, community should always be the central consideration when planning and delivering outreach. See page 41 for more information.

For more information on the Propeller model, see the Australian Emergency Management Institute's Community Recovery Handbook 2.

32 Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2, p78.
33 Original design by Alter.
34 Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2, p74.

Outreach process

Outreach can be used during preparedness, response or recovery phases of emergency management.

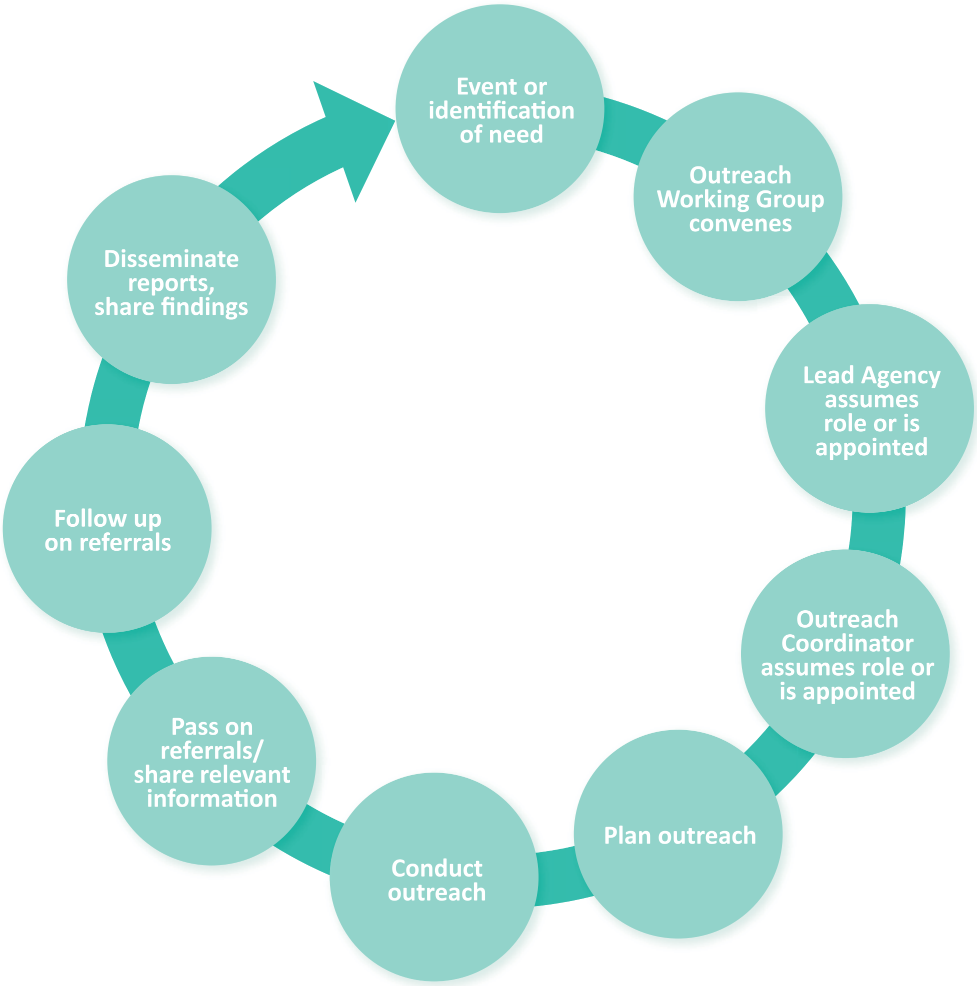


Figure 4 demonstrates the key steps in the outreach process.[35]

This circular model demonstrates how outreach can be an ongoing activity from relief through to long-term recovery. It outlines the key steps involved in outreach operations, from planning to following up where referrals are made, and reporting. The linear sequence is intended as a guide only and is explained in detail in Part Two.

Designing a collaborative approach to outreach, via these steps, ensures a consistent outreach operation, regardless of the number of agencies involved and the disaster context in which it is utilised.

Part Two of this framework explains the roles and responsibilities involved in outreach, and provides guidance on planning and conducting outreach, as shown in this model.

35 Original design by Alter.

Part Two
Outreach Guidelines

This section is designed to guide and assist agencies to plan and deliver outreach using a coordinated, multi-agency approach.

2

Guiding principles

When coordinating outreach, agencies must consider these key principles and actions. These appear in more detail throughout the guidelines.

Psychosocial

- adopt a holistic approach to disaster recovery
- deliver PFA to affected people
- include appropriate referral paths for more critical support
- ensure support for outreach personnel
- monitor the psychosocial status of affected communities

Collaboration

- invite and involve relevant local groups to be part of the Working Group, seek community input
- respect the needs and context of the local area and community
- government and non-government agencies work together
- appoint a Lead Agency, share roles across the Outreach Working Group
- avoid duplication

Communication

- agencies understand the aims of the outreach
- community is informed of when and why outreach is happening
- ensure messaging is consistent
- deliver accurate, helpful information to affected people
- efficiently collate and share information with relevant parties

Safety and planning

- operate outreach only when it is safe to do so
- outreach personnel must be trained and briefed before outreach
- plan where to visit and why
- provide teams with necessary equipment and supplies
- always seek and leverage local knowledge (about the natural, built, economic and social environment) where possible

Privacy and information gathering

- carefully consider what information you need to collect and what you will do with this information once collated
- identify documentation systems
- clarify reporting lines and who has access to information
- use simple Needs Assessment forms
- clarify what is identifiable and non-identifiable information
- consider how information will be stored and/or destroyed

People, roles and responsibilities

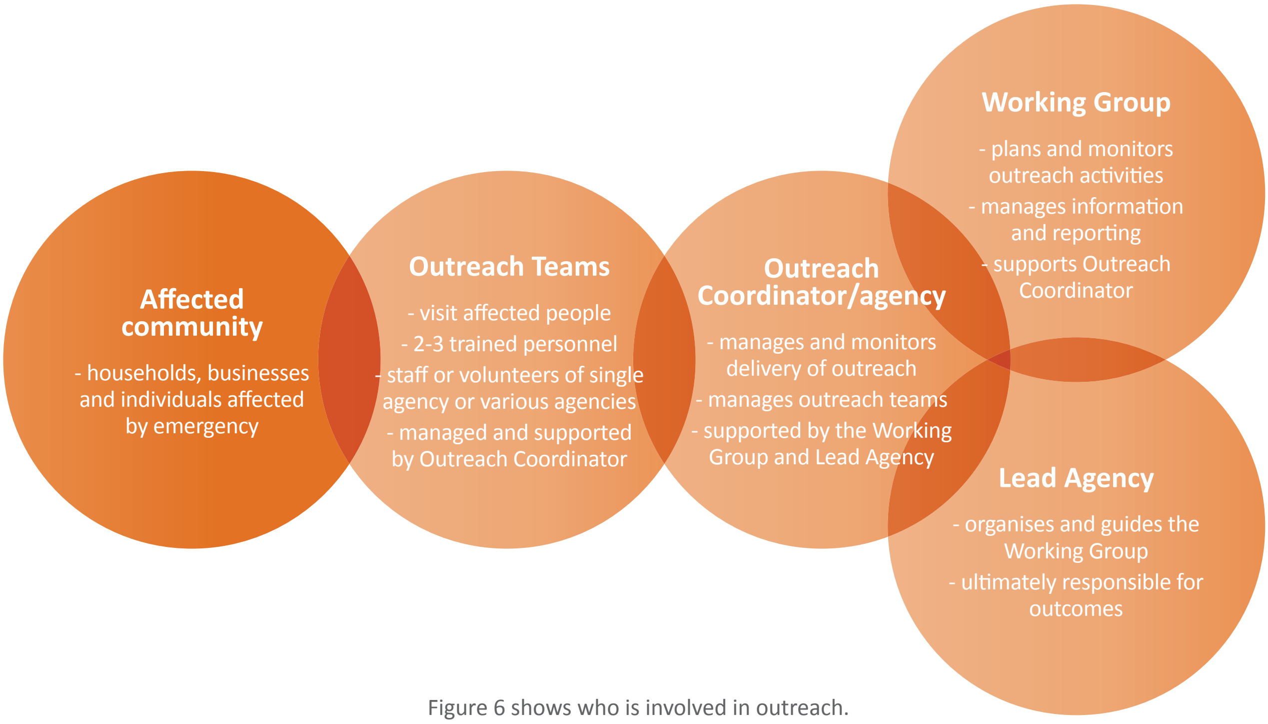


Figure 6 shows who is involved in outreach.

This model illustrates the functions of outreach roles and the relationships between them. Note that community is the starting point and reason for every outreach activity.

In Victoria, recovery coordination across agencies can occur at a state, regional or municipal level. Outreach can be managed at any of these levels. It is strongly recommended that agencies are pre-identified for roles and written in to emergency management plans, arrangements or Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).

Self-activation of agencies can lead to tension and confusion between groups. It can also lead to a lack of information sharing. Defining these roles before an emergency aims to:

- Develop relationships and cultivate harmonious networks between agencies.
- Increase understanding of agencies' functions, people and capacities.
- Reduce confusion and duplication in the aftermath of an event (for workers and those affected).
- Increase confidence within the Working Group and Outreach Teams.
- Increase opportunities for outreach to start in a timely, efficient way.

- Increase opportunities to leverage local knowledge and build capacity.
- Promote wider acceptance in the emergency services sector of outreach as an effective, coordinated activity functioning within broader relief and recovery systems.
- Encourage people to plan for what might happen in post-disaster settings and therefore increase organisational and community resilience.

Depending on the scale and location of the disaster event, the planning arrangements that are in place and the available resources, multiple roles may be filled by one agency. Alternatively, each role could be allocated to a different organisation. What is important is that each agency and every member works together, collaborating and supporting one another to plan and deliver a successful outreach operation.

If outreach is being used as a vehicle for conducting secondary impact assessment, the responsibility will rest with the recovery manager or coordinator at the local, regional or state level, as outlined in EMV's Impact Assessment Guidelines.

A multi-agency recovery meeting following bushfires in the Blue Mountains, NSW, 2015.
Source: Jessie Huard, Australian Red Cross.

Lead Agency

- Must have the capacity to make timely, considered decisions and be well resourced to effectively oversee outreach operations (i.e. not be overloaded with other tasks).
- Is ideally experienced in managing similar operations and has excellent local knowledge.
- Must be able and willing to motivate and support the Working Group and outreach personnel.
- Must be respectful of local context and needs.
- Is ultimately responsible for all operational, safety and reporting activities.
- Usually, the lead agency will be the LGA. Depending on the scale of the event, it may be a state government department, or a local area health service. If the LGA is the Lead Agency, it is likely to be the role of the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) to represent council in this role.

It is the role of the Lead Agency to:

Be appropriately trained before disaster strikes.	
Refer to MEMP or other arrangements where applicable. Contact and convene members to begin planning.	
Access IIAs and any other available impact assessments or information and disseminate to the Working Group.	
Guide the Working Group in planning and delivering outreach visits:	
Ensuring Outreach Teams are trained and that PFA will be delivered.	
Ensuring teams have access to appropriate equipment and supplies.	
Manage communication, including contact and email lists, in the Working Group.	
Manage updates and maintain regular contact with the Working Group as required before, during and after outreach.	
Host, or organise the hosting of, and attend all meetings.	
Ensure the provision of psychosocial support for the Working Group and outreach personnel.	
Identify and connect with other appropriate agencies or groups who might collaborate or assist with the outreach.	
Manage, support and monitor the tasks of the Working Group as listed below.	

Outreach Working Group

Relevant agencies for the Working Group include, but are not limited to: LGAs, Local recovery committee, Community leaders and members, State government departments (e.g. DHHS, DELWP, DEDJTR, Red Cross, VCCEM, Salvation Army and other non-government groups, Local area health groups or others with PFA focus, VicPol, SES, CFA, MFB or other response agencies, Interstate agencies or defence force personnel (in larger scale events).

It is the role of the Working Group to:

Be appropriately trained before disaster strikes.	
Refer to MEMP or other arrangements where applicable.	
Refer to IIAs and any other available impact assessment reports or information.	
Identify, address and monitor safety concerns, risks and hazards.	
Respect local community resilience and existing skills and knowledge.	
Identify and address issues and sensitivity related to specific community concerns, e.g. cultural awareness, family or social breakdowns.	
Regarding outreach operations:	
Identify properties to be visited.	
If the outreach coordinating agency is not designated, decide which agencies will be directly involved in the outreach visits and managing day-to-day outreach operations.	
Determine a Code of Conduct for outreach personnel. (This task might be completed by the Outreach Coordinator.) See page 40 for more information.	
Regarding information gathering and reporting:	
Identify groups that require information from affected communities and clearly articulate what information is required and why.	
Monitor information needs to ensure information being collected is relevant.	
Refer to any pre-existing forms and determine how to collect accurate information.	
Determine which information needs to be identified (with personal details like names, addresses) and which information remains de-identified. Remember: In **most** cases, information should remain de-identified.	
Determine which agencies are responsible for collating and reporting information after visits.	
Determine which groups can access identified and/or de-identified information, including considering a range of modes of communication.	
Disseminate reports to agreed recipients.	
Follow up where necessary with agreed recipients.	
Provide other updates or reports, as required, to local, regional or state recovery committees on outcomes of the outreach and emerging community needs.	
Regarding referrals:	
Determine appropriate pathways and agencies for referral.	
Determine how referrals will be managed and ensure that agencies responsible for following up on referrals have the capacity to do so.	
Monitor the referral system to ensure effective outcomes for affected people.	
Continually evaluate the outreach model and assess outcomes.	
Work collaboratively with any external stakeholders, such as neighbouring recovery committees, donors or media.	
Brief the Outreach Coordinator on outreach aims and plans.	
Work collaboratively to support the Outreach Coordinator to plan and conduct outreach.	

Outreach Coordinator

- There may be more than one person filling the role of Outreach Coordinator.
- Outreach in Victoria is usually coordinated by one of the following groups; LGA, Red Cross, VCCEM or a local PFA provider.
- The Outreach Coordinator must be directly involved in all Working Group meetings and have open communication and reporting lines to all members, including the Lead Agency.
- The Outreach Coordinator, and any other staff involved in managing outreach operations, should be trained in PFA or psychosocial support. This is to ensure provision of appropriate support to outreach personnel.

It is the role of the Outreach Coordinator to:

Be appropriately trained before disaster strikes.	
Work collaboratively with the Working Group and any external stakeholders to plan and conduct outreach.	
Participate in other operations debriefs that relate to the emergency event and its impact on the affected community.	
Manage day-to-day delivery of outreach.	
Conduct briefings and debriefings.	
Monitor daily conditions and concerns to ensure teams are safe.	
Organise catering for personnel.	
Stay in touch with all teams and assist with logistical matters as required.	
Keep a log of daily operations. Ensure teams sign on and off each shift.	
Ensure personnel are correctly clothed and equipped.	
Provide leadership and direction to the Outreach Teams.	
Manage rostering of Outreach Teams.	
Ensure outreach personnel are aware of and uphold the Code of Conduct.	
Regarding outreach personnel:	
Where possible, ensure outreach personnel are trained in outreach.	
Ensure at least one member of every Outreach Team is trained in PFA.	
Where possible, ensure outreach teams reflect the make up of the community in which they are working.	
Monitor and assess the teams' capacity to meet the needs of affected people.	

Monitor the physical and emotional wellbeing of personnel. Consider the effects of fatigue and vicarious trauma on Outreach Teams. Ensure psychosocial support is available and provided to personnel.	
Monitor the behavior of team members and promote calm, amicable dynamics between personnel.	
Ensure outreach personnel are briefed and understand:	
The aims of the outreach.	
Situational and background information.	
Maps.	
Referral systems.	
Reporting systems.	
Safety protocols.	
The code of conduct.	
Regarding visits, information gathering and reporting:	
Collate forms and information from Outreach Team members.	
Monitor and document areas visited via Visit Logs.	
Ensure information is being collected as per the aims of the outreach.	
Ensure privacy concerns are not breached.	
Complete daily, weekly or other reporting requirements.	
Share reports with the Working Group.	
Regarding referrals:	
Follow the Working Group's agreed referral system and send referrals to agreed agencies.	
Monitor referrals to ensure they are being followed up by relevant agencies	
Decide whether and when to contact residents who have been referred, to ensure their needs are being met.	
Communicate regularly with the Working Group to:	
Report any major concerns from outreach personnel.	
Report any major concerns from community members.	
Report any concerns regarding WHS issues, incidents or other operational matters.	
Implement agreed changes or improvements to outreach operations.	

Depending on the scale of the outreach operation, an administration support worker may be required to assist the Outreach Coordinator. The administration support worker might undertake the following functions:

- Prepare information packs for the Outreach Teams.
- Prepare and maintain equipment required by the Outreach Teams.
- Organise catering for all personnel.
- Participate in daily debriefs for note-taking.
- Assist with collating data and information from outreach forms.
- Assist with archiving and filing of forms.

An Outreach Team of two volunteers consult their map before visiting homes in Flowerdale, Victoria, 2012. Source: Rodney Dekker, Australian Red Cross.

Outreach Teams

- Should consist of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 trained personnel, so as not to overwhelm people being visited.
- Training should ideally take place before disaster strikes, but on-the-job experience can also be very valuable. Pair any inexperienced personnel with experienced personnel.
- Must consist of at least one person trained in PFA.
- May be a mix of staff or volunteers from government and non-government organisations.
- The exact composition of the Outreach Team will depend on the aim of the visits and will be decided by the Outreach Coordinator and/or the Working Group.

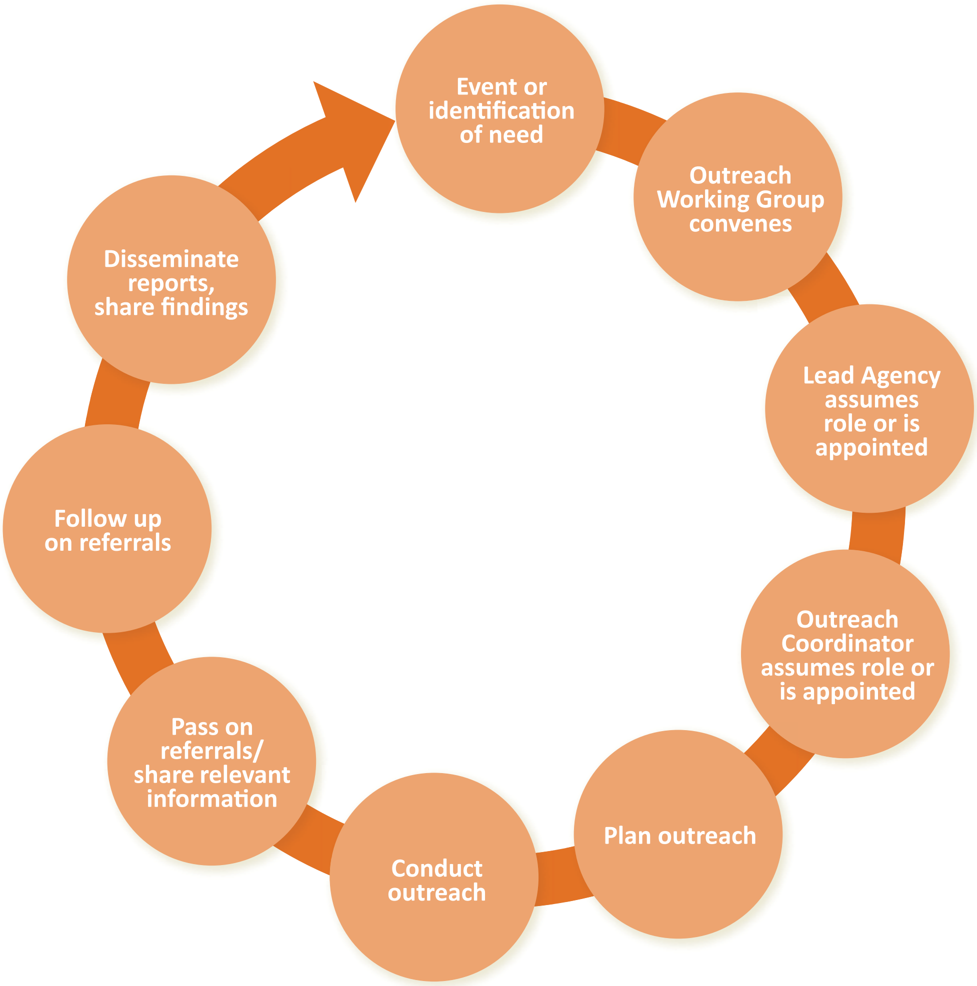
It is the role of Outreach Teams to:

Ensure they are briefed on the aims and activities of the outreach before undertaking outreach.	
Be physically, emotionally and mentally willing and able to conduct outreach.	
Conduct visits, deliver PFA to affected people and gather information as required.	
Immediately report any safety concerns to the Outreach Coordinator.	
Immediately report any major concerns about affected people to the Outreach Coordinator.	
Report conduct or operational concerns about other outreach personnel to the Outreach Coordinator.	
Regarding visits and information gathering:	
Document areas visited as per briefing and documentation systems.	
Gather information via Needs Assessment forms or other forms provided by the Outreach Coordinator.	
Ensure privacy concerns are not breached.	
Uphold the Code of Conduct for every visit.	
Regarding referrals:	
Follow the referral system and pass on referrals to the Outreach Coordinator.	
Ensure privacy concerns are not breached.	
Regarding self care:	
Monitor physical, emotional and mental wellbeing during outreach.	
Seek support when required.	

Outreach process

As featured in Part One, this model outlines the main steps involved in outreach, from planning to following up after outreach visits have been made.

The process of planning and conducting outreach is explained in this chapter. Key tasks are explained in greater detail in the next chapter, Important tips for conducting outreach.



Steps in the outreach process.[36]

The linear sequence of this model is intended as a guide only, to help designate responsibilities and plan outreach.

36 Original design by Alter.

Remember: the Working Group, Lead Agency and Outreach Coordinator/agency might already be defined in the local, regional or state arrangements. Where this is the case, roles should be assumed immediately following an emergency event. However, invitations or requests may be made to relevant external stakeholders or agencies to collaborate or assist with the outreach.

1. Outreach Working Group convenes

The LGA will generally call together the Working Group.

Due to the unpredictable and disruptive nature of emergencies, it should not be assumed that all agencies will be willing and able to participate in outreach. There may also be instances where new or unexpected groups offer the Working Group support or resources. All members of the Working Group should outline their capacity to collaborate and confirm their level of commitment to the outreach to assist planning, ensure transparency and set realistic expectations within the group.

2. Lead Agency assumes role or is appointed

Where numerous agencies collaborate to provide a holistic outreach service, it is important that one agency takes a lead or coordinating role to safeguard consistency throughout the process. In Victoria, this agency will often be local government.

3. Outreach Coordinator assumes role or is appointed

This role is a person or persons appointed by the Lead Agency.

4. Plan outreach

It is the responsibility of the Outreach Coordinator and the Working Group to carry out the following planning duties. Tasks need to be prioritised depending on the context of the emergency and location.

During the planning process, it is important to seek community input on as many decisions as possible. See page 41 for more information.

This table is intended to act as a guide or checklist in planning specific tasks.

Task	Details	Who/ when	Ongoing monitoring required?
Access relevant IIA data, MEMPs and MoUs	Source and assess available IIAs and any secondary impact assessments.		Y
	If applicable, consult any plans, strategies, roles and other arrangements as defined in the MEMP.		
	Consult other plans or MoUs to ensure consistency.		Y
Determine timing	Consult IIAs and other available reports.		Y
	Determine timeline for outreach.		
	Prioritise areas for visits.		Y
Manage funding	Organise funding as required. Consult any existing MoUs. Note: costs may be covered through the NDRRA.		Y
	Work out budgets. Estimates are fine and should assist in planning repeat outreach operations.		Y
	Seek or apply for funding to ensure sustainability of outreach operations (immediate and future).		Y
Prioritise provision of psychosocial support	Prioritise PFA as a key service to be delivered via outreach. All participating agencies and departments must support this aim.		Y
	Identify group/s responsible for monitoring psychosocial support and PFA.		Y
	Determine PFA support systems for outreach personnel. There should be a range of options for personnel to seek confidential support.		
	Identify what information is to be provided to affected people and put in outreach kits.		Y
	Identify support services available for affected people and brief outreach personnel to disseminate this information via outreach.		Y

Assess safety	Consult detailed maps of impacted area.		Y
	Identify hazards and risks.		Y
	Address or mitigate hazards and risks.		Y
	Organise insurance for vehicles and other equipment as required.		
	Confirm roadside assistance arrangements on vehicles.		
	Inform local police, SES and other relevant agencies that Outreach Teams will be on the road.		
Determine information gathering and report-ing arrange-ments	Identify what information is needed, by whom and why, in line with the agreed aims of the outreach visits.		Y
	Determine documentation systems (paper/digital) for collecting and sharing information. How will information be recorded during/after a visit? How will this information be collated after visits?		Y
	Create simple Needs Assessment forms (or consider appropriateness of existing forms) for Outreach Teams to record information. See example form in the Appendix section.		
	Determine which agencies are responsible for collating and reporting information after visits, and how they will share this.		
	Identify who will receive reports or other information collected during outreach.		

Plan outreach visits	Consult with response agencies, community and government to identify areas and properties to be visited.		Y
	Source locational information and maps.		
	Determine number of visits required.		
	Determine number of days required.		
	Determine number of personnel required.		
	Determine Code of Conduct.		
	Determine daily running sheet or timeline.		Y
	Prepare checklists for Outreach Coordinator and/or Outreach Teams.		
	Where possible, consider which personnel are best suited for the context of the emergency and the make up of the affected community.		
	Begin rostering of Outreach Teams.		
	Outreach Coordinator determines and/or is briefed on the aims of the outreach.		Y
	Prepare briefing for Outreach Teams: Aims of outreach. Reminder of Code of Conduct. How to collect and record information. Referral system. Reporting system.		Y
	Prepare situational information for personnel (weather, safety concerns, travel times etc).		
	Determine and source supplies and equipment required for outreach operations.		
	Determine headquarters or base for daily outreach visits. Source supplies and equipment required for base.		
	Determine and confirm other logistics such as accommodation and travel needs for outreach personnel.		
	Determine and source supplies/ equipment required to create outreach kits including forms and information to be disseminated.		Y
	Determine end-of-day process to debrief personnel, collect forms and collate information.		Y

Establish referral pathways and follow up	Determine appropriate pathways and agencies for referral.		Y
	Develop referral forms or systems (how outreach personnel record and pass on referrals).		Y
	Develop monitoring system for referrals (how referrals will be passed on to agreed agencies, how to ensure agencies are following up).		Y
Establish communication arrangements	Determine how you will communicate with community about upcoming outreach.		
	Send communications to inform community about upcoming outreach.		
	Prepare a deployment plan – assessment of assets, damage and safety considerations, names and contact numbers of people involved. Share with Working Group and relevant external stakeholders before outreach to ensure consistent messaging.		
	Appoint a single spokesperson or contact for public or stakeholder enquiries about outreach. Make contact information readily available.		
	Ensure open and regular communication lines between Outreach Coordinator and the Working Group as outreach is underway.		
	Ensure open and regular communication lines between outreach personnel and the Outreach Coordinator.		
	Consider and respond to media requests.		Y
	Determine how you will communicate with community about completed outreach.		
	Send communications to inform community about completed outreach.		
Implement monitoring systems	Determine who is responsible for continual evaluation of the outreach operation.		Y
	Determine who is responsible for evaluating outcomes.		Y
	Determine who will assess demand for future or ongoing outreach.		Y
	Determine when to initiate planning for future outreach.		

5. Conduct outreach.

It is important to understand what to expect from a day of outreach to ensure personnel are physically and mentally prepared. Outreach often runs over several days and usually the same structure is followed each day.

Here is an example of a daily outreach schedule. Of course, times, tasks and plans will change depending on the context. Access to areas is a major consideration, as is travel, especially in rural and regional areas.

Flexibility is key. Every outreach day and visit is unique.

Successful outreach depends on an adaptable, flexible approach.

0830	Personnel meet at base for daily briefing. Teams prepare, pick up cars and outreach kits.
0900	Outreach Teams travel (drive or walk) to properties to conduct visits. Outreach Coordinator completes reporting, rostering, logistical, planning or other duties.
1200	Lunch.
1300	Resume visits.
1600	Return to base. Collate forms, debrief with Outreach Teams, re-stock outreach kits, prepare for following day. Outreach Coordinator completes daily reporting/tracking duties.
1700	Day ends.

Some common outreach practices:

- The Outreach Coordinator contacts personnel at least 24 hours before their outreach shift to provide situational information so they can prepare for weather conditions, travel times etc.
- Vehicles are provided. Personnel may drive their own cars to/from the base, but personal vehicles should not be used during outreach.
- The group may come together for lunch at a local spot. Personnel must not be seen discussing outreach, gossiping or talking about residents during lunch or in a public space. Alternatively, if outreach is being conducted over a large area, teams may be given a take-away lunch to have a break on the road.
- Depending on the location and duration of the outreach, accommodation for personnel may be required.

Empowering and informing outreach personnel is important.

Tell them why the outreach is happening and what happens with the information collected during visits.

Be clear about the value of their work.

Here is an example of an outreach visit:

1	Team consults maps and property lists.
2	Arrives at property. Assesses any safety concerns.
3	Approaches people on property (knocks on door, calls out). Identifies themselves, explains purpose of visit and initiates conversation.
4	Employs PFA techniques as per training (active listening, empathy, honesty, non-judgement etc).
5	If possible, team asks questions to collect required information.
6	Provides local recovery information as required.
7	If required, team takes referral.
8	Thanks residents and departs.
9	Team records observations or details of visit as soon as possible, ideally out of sight of those visited, to ensure information is accurate. Logs property visit.
10	Team may phone Outreach Coordinator with any immediate concerns or to debrief /support one another as required.

Nominating the length of an outreach visit is very difficult. Every property and person is different and will require a personalised approach to be determined by the Outreach Team in the moment. Finding the balance between respecting privacy, providing support and conducting an information-gathering recovery activity can be tricky. Psychosocial considerations remain at the centre of every visit and conversations should never be rushed or forced on a resident. Many personnel talk about 'getting a feel for outreach' and this natural, unstructured approach often results in the most meaningful outcomes.

Visits tend to be between 15-30 minutes duration. The length of a visit should be guided by the resident, but outreach personnel must also keep in mind the boundaries of their role (ie not providing counselling) and make referrals where necessary.

See more information on page 50 about how to conduct a visit.

Video: This Red Cross training video demonstrates a day of outreach, following volunteers as they go door to door.

6. Pass on referrals and share relevant information.

Outreach Teams pass forms, information, observations and any referrals on to the Outreach Coordinator. This should happen at the end of each day.

During the operation, the Outreach Coordinator compiles daily, weekly or other reports (as agreed in the planning stage) and may share interim reports or updates with the Working Group or other agencies as previously defined by the Working Group. Referrals are passed on to relevant agencies, as per the referral system set up in the planning stage.

7. Follow up on referrals.

The Outreach Coordinator and/or Working Group must track referrals to ensure the referral system is working and that people are being contacted by the relevant agency. This is an important step to assist residents, build trust in the community, and avoid disappointment or secondary stressors for the resident.

After passing on referral forms to the appropriate agency, the Outreach Coordinator may follow up with the resident to ensure they have been contacted.

8. Disseminate reports and share findings.

The Outreach Coordinator and the Working Group are responsible for reporting. Reports should be sent to agreed recipients in an efficient and timely manner.

- Reports should accurately represent the voice and needs of the affected community and must include key findings, themes and concerns regarding the impacted area and affected people.
- Reports may also include suggestions or recommendations for recovery activities, based on the findings.
- Reports may be in the form of situation reports on a daily or weekly basis, or at the end of each outreach operation. They may be a summary of outcomes or an email. Whatever the format, stick to the agreed reporting system as set up by the Working Group.
- Outreach reports can be provided to residents, if requested.

Important tips for conducting outreach

This section covers tasks and concepts relevant to delivering outreach in emergency-affected areas, listed in alphabetical order.[37] It is intended to:

- Assist in running outreach operations.
- Encourage readers to conduct further learning via the linked resources.

Much of the following information requires consideration in the planning stages and is the responsibility of the Working Group and/or the Outreach Coordinator.

Briefing and debriefing

Each day, Outreach Team members must meet at the base for a briefing.

The briefing should include all the specific information needed in order to conduct outreach for the day, including:

- Community and situational information.
- Background to the event.
- Recovery overview (what has been happening, update on any previous outreach or other recovery activities conducted in the area).
- Key information to be given to residents.
- Key questions to ask residents.
- Instructions on how to fill in forms.
- Specific services available to residents.
- Details on the day's schedule including lunch and return arrangements/times.
- Other stakeholders may speak at the briefing, including community members or representatives from collaborating agencies.
- The Outreach Coordinator allocates teams, provides maps and property/street/area list of places to visit.
- Outreach kits are provided.
- During the briefing there should be plenty of time for personnel to ask questions.

37 Most notes in this chapter are referenced from Australian Red Cross' Emergency Services Training Toolkit and Emergency Services Outreach Guidelines, 2015.

Following visits, the day should conclude with all teams returning to the base. Sometimes, return times are staggered so personnel are not waiting or held up at the base. On return, each team debriefs separately with the Outreach Coordinator to:

- Go through forms and clarify notes, trends and observations.
- Pass on any referrals to the outreach coordinator.
- Debrief about any challenging situations.
- Debrief and provide feedback about outreach processes.
- Request any further self care or support.

Code of conduct

Post-disaster settings can be unusual or stressful environments. Personnel may come across difficult personalities or challenging scenarios when on outreach. It is important for the Working Group and Outreach Coordinator to determine a Code of Conduct for all personnel to guide Outreach Teams in how to respond and behave in consistent, positive ways when in the community. An outreach Code of Conduct should be underpinned by ideas of trust, respect, impartiality, collaboration and empathy.

Most organisations will have a Code of Conduct. It is a good idea to adapt part or all of the existing Code to help instruct personnel on how to conduct themselves during outreach. This helps to clearly define expectations by asking personnel to agree to a shared set of principles of behaviour. It is also a valuable way to unite or bond personnel, especially if they are from various agencies.

See this example from VicPol for an idea of the style and purpose of a Code of Conduct.

Common outreach challenges

It is important to acknowledge the non-linear nature of recovery and the challenges that may arise during outreach. By planning outreach operations before disaster strikes you might be able to mitigate some of these common concerns:

- Funding – who pays, unexpected costs.
- Human resources – quantity of personnel; inexperienced, untrained or unavailable staff; fatigue.
- Logistics of sourcing equipment - especially vehicles, including fuel.
- Liaising with multiple agencies – ensuring timely agreement and cooperation across groups.
- Difficulty in predicting what you might need.
- Obtaining accurate, timely information.
- Dealing with difficult situations - cultural issues; pre-existing community and individual vulnerabilities or issues; conflict or tension within the community or exerted by particular community members.
- Ongoing safety or access concerns – ongoing weather problems; delayed repairs to damaged roads or other obstructions to access.
- Level of community awareness of the outreach visits.

Community input

It is strongly suggested that, where possible, the Working Group seek input or some form of approval or agreement from community members or leaders before conducting visits. This may come via community representatives in the Working Group, or via informal conversations with community members.

- Tap into local knowledge and expertise. Local residents with lived experience of past emergency events can provide valuable information about what has previously worked or not worked in relief and recovery in the area.
- Check for any ‘red flags’ or major concerns about running outreach.
- Respect the resilience and capacity of community members, their wishes and ideas about how to guide their own recovery as much as possible.
- Help spread the word about upcoming outreach activities, create two-way communication and establish a feedback loop between agencies and community to ensure outreach remains on the right track.
- Where possible, gather resources and equipment, skills, locational and situational information from local sources.
- Reports should be provided to community representatives and shared with community members upon request.

Depending on the event, the Working Group might seek input from specific sections of the community, including youth; cultural groups; gender groups; sporting or other clubs; schools; business or tourism networks; Senior Citizens; Lions, Rotary or other clubs and existing volunteer networks. The purpose of speaking to these groups, or representatives of these groups, is to understand how outreach might benefit the recovery of particular sections of the community.

This is also an opportunity to open lines of communication between the Working Group and community and to assist in spreading the word about upcoming outreach operations.

Conclusion of outreach

At the end of an outreach operation, it is recommended that:

- The Outreach Coordinator debriefs or reports back to the Working Group to outline or summarise any operational concerns or lessons learnt.
- The Working Group convenes for the opportunity to discuss final reports, seek clarification and outline any improvements that might be made to future operations.
- The Working Group is able to articulate whether or not the aims of the operation have been met.
- The Lead Agency undertakes steps to make amendments or improvements to local emergency arrangements, such as the MEMP.
- All personnel are offered psychosocial support and information about how to seek ongoing support if required.
- Outreach personnel have the opportunity to provide feedback on the overall operation (separate to daily debriefs). This may be done via email or phone, a few days after the final shifts are completed.
- Expressions of thanks and gratitude (informal or formal) are made to outreach personnel.
- Outreach personnel are provided reports, a summary of achievements or findings from the operation.
- The Working Group might contact local media to share key findings from outreach reports and inform people of relevant recovery services or activities.

Delivering information to affected people

Accurate and timely information has been identified as one of the key needs of individuals and communities affected by an emergency. Whether in the early or longer term stages of recovery, all information provided must originate from credible sources and be relevant to affected people.

- Personnel must not make up answers to questions where the correct answer is not known or information is not available.
- Personnel should promote self-efficacy by encouraging residents to find answers themselves using their networks.
- Do not overload residents with flyers, newsletters and brochures. If personnel are handing out information, ensure it is simple and clear.
- Personnel should direct residents to a recovery centre or information hub, a website or telephone number if available.

Equipment and supplies, outreach kits

This list of what is usually needed for outreach is intended as a guide only.

Item	✓
Secure outreach base (usually a community space or shire office):	
Furniture	
Whiteboard	
Phones and chargers	
Wifi/internet	
Computers or tablets and chargers	
Printer and paper	
Extension cords, power boards	
Stationery	
Coffee/tea, snacks, water	
Basic toiletries - tissues, toilet paper	
Uniforms, tabards, hats, jumpers, raincoats, umbrellas as required	
Vehicles	
Maps and locational information	
Forms and paperwork:	
Needs Assessment forms, other information gathering forms	
Referral forms	
Property lists or visit logs	
Folders of blank forms for outreach kits	
Folders for reporting/filing	
Outreach kits, containing:	
Phones	
Fuel cards/petty cash	
Folders of aforementioned paperwork	
Local recovery information to be delivered	
Calling cards - left when no-one is at the property, to explain someone has visited the property, why they visited and how to get more info/support	
Other relevant printed materials or comfort items as agreed by the Working Group.	
Water, snacks, lunch as required	
Sunscreen, insect repellent, basic toiletries as required	

Information gathering and reporting

Information gathering arrangements can represent challenges for those running outreach operations, including:

- The different information needs of a variety of agencies.
- The capacity of generalist outreach personnel to gather specific information accurately (for example regarding primary production losses, or levels of residential damage).
- Privacy issues.
- Timeliness.
- The need to reconcile information gathering needs with the priority of delivering PFA to affected people. As a general rule, psychosocial considerations should take precedence over data collection; it is important that recovery agencies **do no harm** and avoid compounding the impacts of emergencies by creating secondary stressors through, for example, imposing on people's privacy or asking for detailed personal information.

These guidelines acknowledge that for many LGAs, particularly regarding landholders in regional and rural areas, their priority might be to gather information about damage to infrastructure, land, livestock, equipment, road access and other impacts relating to livelihood and the economic environment.

Wherever possible, the scope of information gathering should be pre-determined, perhaps using pre-prepared forms that are quick and easy to adapt as required. Where particular types of damage have occurred, it may be useful to include a technical expert in the outreach team, for example a surveyor or engineer.

All parties wishing to collect information from affected residents need to be clear about what they need and why. It is important to work as a team to:

- Ask as few questions as possible.
- Ensure information collected is relevant and useful.
- Avoid multiple visits to one property (unless a follow up visit has been recommended due to the residents' particular needs).

Forms (digital or paper)

Information may be recorded in various ways including using paper forms, smart phones, tablets or GIS databases. Whatever the specific format, it should be consistent across all visits in an outreach operation. Contents (questions etc) should be tailored to collect specific data on the individual event. Always check the relevance of generic or copied forms from previous operations before starting new outreach activities.

Other considerations might include incorporation of photographs, social media information or satellite images.

Keep all forms and paperwork simple, to ensure personnel can accurately and efficiently capture the information required. Consider also how the information might be archived or saved for future operations.

Needs Assessment Forms

- Needs Assessment forms are aimed at gathering information to provide a generalised needs analysis, usually in the form of an outreach report, to relevant agencies (often LGAs).
- Needs Assessment forms can gather practical, physical and psychosocial information and may be used to advocate for relevant services and support. For example, if an outreach operation finds that fencing is a major concern for residents, agencies can push for appropriate fencing resources to be available in that area.
- The form should include specific recovery questions to enable gathering information about community strengths, recovery needs and concerns.
- Needs Assessment forms are not about providing specific, property or personal information to agencies. If this is required, a referral form must be completed and signed.
- While forms can be shown to residents, it is best if they are filled in out of view of the resident so that the focus of the outreach visit is on the conversation with the resident and not on the form.
- Any critical needs should be captured on a referral form. This must be done in the presence of the resident and completed with their signature.
- Regarding ethics:
    - It is important that personnel make known that information is being collected and written into a report.
    - Personnel must not make assumptions on forms. It is important to record only information given by the resident.
    - It is important to offer to show residents the forms used and make sure they understand that if they wish, they can access a copy of the final report.
    - If residents indicate that they do not want forms filled out from their visit, personnel should carry on with the visit as normal (deliver PFA) but not fill out any forms for that property.

Read the section on Visiting affected properties and people on page 50.

Privacy

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner advises that agencies should consider preparing a 'Personal information handling plan' that addresses how personal information will be handled before, during and after an emergency.[38] For more information see these information sheets on the Privacy Act 1998:

- Information Sheet (Public and Private Sectors) 1 - Emergencies and disasters
- Privacy agency resource 6 - Emergencies and disasters

In Victoria, agencies should note that special provisions are made for the collection and sharing or disclosure of information in emergencies. For more detail see the Guidelines to the Information Privacy Principles.[39]

38 Office of the Asutralian Information Commissioner, Privacy Act 1998, Private agency resource 6: Emergencies and Disasters, 2015.
39 Victorian Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection, Guidelines to the Information Privacy Principles. Edition 3, 2011. p64 and 67-8.

Referrals

See page 47 for more information.

Reporting

- Reports may be in the form of situation reports on a daily or weekly basis, or at the end of each outreach operation. Whatever the format, stick to the agreed reporting system as set up by the Working Group.
- Information from outreach reports may contribute to broader reports on the impact of an event or research into the impacts of disasters. Consider these broader uses when compiling reports.
- Reports should be filed or archived in a consistent manner. Clearly identify the event, date and location pertaining to the report.
- Reports may be provided to the public, on request.
- When writing about the psychosocial impacts of disasters:
  - Do not exaggerate or under-represent the situation. Use plain language to convey the status or condition of people's emotional, social, spiritual or physical wellbeing.
  - Avoid language that victimises those affected.
  - Avoid jargon and highly academic, technical language.
  - Never reveal the identities of those affected (avoid detailed descriptions of locations etc).

Visit logs

- A property list or visit log needs to be filled in so personnel and coordinators can keep track of which properties have been visited.
- This can be a simple table with street names and property numbers and cells for personnel to log if the property was located, if visit was conducted or not and any other notes regarding visitation to the property.
- Some properties might be uninhabited (farmland or sheds only) or inaccessible (gates locked), or the maps and property intelligence provided might prove to be inaccurate. This information should be logged for the purpose of consistency and to inform any future outreach operations.

See the Appendix for an example Visit log.

Outreach teams

In allocating outreach personnel into teams, it is important to consider the skills as well as training of each outreach team member. Consider:

- Level of experience, confidence and skill within each team. Avoid pairing two inexperienced or unconfident people together.
- Personality – who will work well together, who will not work well together? Are there any pairings that will complement each other's strengths and weaknesses?
- Gender – where possible, it is beneficial to have a male and female on each team.
- Age – where possible, it can be beneficial to partner people of different ages.

Psychosocial support for affected people and for outreach personnel

There is a great deal of information on the importance of psychosocial support and how to provide PFA to affected people. The links in Part Three are particularly helpful for people working in outreach.

'Caring for the carers' is of utmost importance for successful and sustainable outreach operations. It is important to acknowledge that outreach, particularly over an extended period, can affect both the physical and emotional wellbeing of personnel.

See the Resource Table and Appendix in Part Three for detailed information on PFA.

Referrals

- A referral happens when a resident requests Outreach Teams make contact with another agency or service provider on their behalf.
- A referral should be taken as a last resort only. Outreach personnel should encourage residents to contact the required service agency themselves, thereby promoting self-efficacy.
- Outreach personnel should never create false impressions or make promises about outcomes of the referral process.
- The referral form must include the privacy statement, which must be understood and signed by the resident.
- Though it is not preferred, there may be instances where information is identified (such as home address or business details) without signed consent. Wherever possible, residents should be aware that identifying information is being passed on or collated in a report and provide verbal consent.
- Referrals might be managed by the Lead Agency or by the Outreach Coordinator (remember, these roles might be the same person or agency). The referral system needs to be set up in the planning stages and should remain consistent through each operation so as to avoid duplication or loss of referrals.

- The Outreach Coordinator/Lead Agency collates and forwards referrals to the agreed agencies.
- The Outreach Coordinator/Lead Agency follows up with the agency to ensure contact has been made. They might also contact the resident to check their needs have been met.
- When taking a referral, outreach personnel should also leave a copy of the privacy statement with the resident for future reference.
- Referral forms must be kept secure, viewed only by appropriate outreach staff and should be destroyed or de-identified as soon as the resident has been contacted by the relevant agency.

For more advice, see Information gathering and reporting on page 44.

See the Appendix for an example referral form.

Safety

The Working Group and Outreach Coordinator are responsible for identifying risks and hazards before and during outreach. All outreach personnel are responsible for their own safety while conducting outreach, and the Coordinator is responsible for keeping teams informed about potential dangers.

Some common factors to consider before deploying personnel into affected areas:

- Road access, blocked roads.
- Road conditions, such as damaged surfaces or increased wildlife at dawn/dusk.
- Damaged buildings and infrastructure, including disturbance of asbestos.
- Damage to the natural environment.
- Personnel must never drive through floodwaters, even if it appears shallow.
- Weather conditions, such as heavy rain, fog or extreme heat.
- Risk of repeat emergency events, for example earthquake aftershocks.
- Chemical hazards.
- Safe drinking water.
- Appropriate vehicles for local terrain, and relevant driving skills.
- Appropriate attire for Outreach Teams.
- Concerns about civil unrest or threats.
- Concerns about specific residents or properties, with dangerous animals for example, that might pose a threat or danger to Outreach Teams.
- Fatigue after driving long distances.
- Fatigue after multiple or consecutive days of conducting visits.

Safety always comes first when conducting outreach.

Under no circumstance should personnel compromise their own safety to 'get the job done'.

Self care tips for outreach workers[40]

The delivery of PFA following an emergency can be very rewarding for people involved in the emergency response. However, it can also be very challenging and stressful for personnel. It is not uncommon for staff and volunteers to feel distressed, tired, troubled, overwhelmed, or frustrated in the course of their work.

Stress is the body's way of getting energy to operate outside our normal comfort zone. It is caused by a variety of stressors; these can be internal (such as thoughts or feelings) or external (such as poor health, conflict, noise etc). If it is not possible to relax between work and other demands, or there is not enough time to unwind between the problems, the stress builds up. It may not be the actual difficulty of the task that causes chronic stress, it may be the sheer quantity or continuity of work.[41]

Stress will not resolve spontaneously. Personnel need to take steps to break the cycle of stress. It is important to identify what causes stress for you and put in place some steps to reduce stress. This sort of self-care is especially important if we wish to support others during times of crisis.

Key messages for outreach personnel experiencing stress:

- Think about what has helped you cope in the past.
- Take time out from work or volunteering commitments.
- Try to take time to eat, rest and relax, even for short periods.
- Try to keep reasonable working hours so you do not become too exhausted.
- Minimise your intake of alcohol, caffeine or nicotine and avoid nonprescription drugs.
- Check in with fellow helpers to see how they are doing, and have them check in with you. Find ways to support each other.
- Talk with friends, loved ones or other people you trust for support.
- Try daily mindfulness or meditative activities, such as Smiling Mind or other mobile apps, to help prepare for or wind down from outreach shifts.

Personnel may feel inadequate or frustrated that they cannot help people with all of their problems.

Remind personnel that they are not responsible for fixing everything. It is their role to help people help themselves.

Video: Disaster Recovery Psychologist Dr Rob Gordon discusses strategies to cope with stress after an emergency.

Training

Outreach training

Ideally, all outreach personnel should be trained in outreach before conducting outreach operations. Currently, agencies involved in delivering outreach in Victoria conduct in-house training. There is no general or public outreach training provider.

Sometimes, it may be appropriate for agencies to conduct on-the-job training. In these circumstances, inexperienced personnel must always be paired with experienced personnel.

40 APS and Australian Red Cross, PFA - An Australian Guide, 2013, p29.
41 Rob Gordon, Information and advice about stress, trauma and PFA.

Red Cross in Victoria has invested much time and resources training and supporting staff and volunteers to build a confident, experienced team of outreach personnel. These volunteers have been deployed locally, nationally and internationally in short and long-term recovery settings. Training is designed specifically for Red Cross staff and volunteers, and is run in-house. However, other agencies seeking to learn more can contact Red Cross' Victorian Emergency Services Team on 1800 232 969.

PFA training

This is highly recommended for anyone involved in planning or delivering outreach operations. A number of organisations offer PFA training in Victoria. See the resource table in Part Three.

Visiting affected properties and people

It can be a daunting thought to knock on the door of a complete stranger and initiate conversation. It is important, however, to make people feel at ease. First impressions are key in creating a comfortable and easy interaction with residents. Again, it is strongly recommended that all outreach personnel complete PFA training prior to conducting outreach.

- It is natural to feel nervous knocking on the door of a stranger.
- Teams should always look out for their personal safety and use their discretion when deciding to enter a property.
- Personnel should always respect people's privacy and property and use basic courtesy when entering a home or property. If someone has a 'do not enter' or 'keep out' sign, personnel should respect this and not enter. If it is appropriate, they should leave a calling card.
- Personnel should always begin by introducing themselves by name, explaining where they are from and the reason for the outreach visit. See the example script below.
- It is best for personnel to be identified through their dress and with name badges.
- Personnel should think about the best way to communicate using positive, relaxed body language, non-verbal communication, a calm voice and simple language. With residents who speak limited or little English, personnel should consider how key information can be conveyed.
- PFA is about active listening, not about talking.
- Part of PFA is normalising stress reactions and letting people know it is okay to talk about their feelings.
- Some residents may not wish to talk and they should not be forced in any way.
- Residents can be distressed, emotional or angry after an emergency event. Personnel should remember that this anger is about the event, not take it personally and that listening is a powerful tool in alleviating anger.

- While the vast majority of residents will appreciate an outreach visit, there may be some instances when the resident does not want visitors. Property owners can be defensive of their property and privacy after an emergency. Personnel should always respect their privacy and if asked, leave immediately.
- Some residents may be busy, distracted or not able to talk at the time. If so, personnel should offer to come back later in the day, or on another day (if possible), or leave a calling card with contact details of someone if they would like to call and talk at a later time.
- It is important to approach conversation in a relaxed, natural way. Personnel might research or ask experienced personnel for ideas on how to break the ice or start conversations. Humour can be effective (and must always be used appropriately). Likewise with local knowledge; a local understanding can provide comfort and familiarity, but personnel must never engage in 'venting' or gossiping with residents.

Below is an example script from Australian Red Cross' outreach training materials. This script is a guide only and is not intended to be followed word for word. The best conversationalist in the outreach team should begin the talking and clearly get straight to the point about the visit to avoid confusing or frustrating the resident:

> *"My name is ... and I am from... We are in the area today to see how you are after the recent (emergency). Based on the conversation we have with you and with others in the area, views, opinions and concerns may be included in a report we write for local agencies so that we can make sure the needs of the community are being heard and met. We don't normally take any personal information –names or addresses – and if we do, it's only for administrative purposes and isn't included in the report."*

PFA is the primary purpose for outreach - a visit should be a conversation, not an interview.

Vulnerable or specific community groups

If prior arrangements exist between local community services and local emergency services, recovery agencies may offer to conduct outreach to these organisations' vulnerable client groups.

Various situations could prevent outreach services from being executed successfully, such as not being aware of people who have language or cultural barriers, mental illness or disabilities (like deafness or limited mobility). Understanding where the vulnerable clients reside and their specific needs assists in prioritising outreach visits.

While outreach is often focused on homes where you are unaware of specific needs, population demographics on the elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic and non-English speaking groups etc is usually obtainable from local area health services, LGAs or DHHS. This demographic information might help in preparing thoroughly for the outreach visits. Outreach may be conducted to residential care facilities, such as retirement villages.

Where and who to visit

The Outreach Coordinator and the Working Group should refer to IIA data, response and situational reports to inform their assessment of the affected area, including those from police, SES, fire services, Centrelink, Geoscience Australia and government agencies.

- Determine which areas can be safely accessed.
- Prioritise areas based on access, levels of impact, population and pre-existing vulnerabilities. See section below on vulnerable groups.
- Consider your resources – personnel, vehicles etc.
- Determine what information you need to collect and who it is best obtained from (residents, local businesses, farmers or property owners, workplaces, etc) and plan outreach accordingly.
- Consider some residents might be displaced.
- If conducting outreach in the immediate aftermath of an event (hours or days) you might need to consider taking water, food or other urgent supplies.

Real examples of outreach

These examples explain how outreach has been planned and operated after emergencies in Victoria and other areas. A brief description of the context is provided. They are included here to demonstrate:

- Every outreach operation is different.
- Outreach requires a flexible and coordinated approach.
- Outreach is scalable and can operate in early and long-term recovery settings.
- The agencies involved in outreach differ depending on the context.

Event and context	Details about outreach
Canterbury earthquakes, New Zealand, 2010 and 2011. On 4 September 2010, the Canterbury region of NZ was hit by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake. Although there were no fatalities, a number of people were injured and substantial damage was sustained to public buildings, businesses and private properties throughout the region. Significant liquefaction affected the eastern suburbs, producing around 400,000 tonnes of silt. Six months later, on 22 February 2011, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake in Christchurch caused 185 fatalities, significant injuries and severe damage to infrastructure, disruption to services and extensive liquefaction in some areas. A large aftershock on 13 June 2011 caused considerable damage, especially to sewerage infrastructure. Adverse weather events, including power cuts caused by snowstorms, also affected the area in 2011.	• After the September event, NZ Government established the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA). CERA was the lead agency for all relief/recovery operations. • Approximately 4 days after the September event, NZ Red Cross (NZRC), CERA and Christchurch City Council (CCC) conducted early outreach. • The purpose of early outreach was to gather information about damage to infrastructure (homes, sheds, driveways etc), deliver PFA; gather information about community and individual needs and update residents about available services. • Teams were made up of 4 people – 1 CCC surveyor, 1 CERA worker and 2 NZRC PFA-trained personnel. Only 3 people would approach the door, with one PFA person acting as a 'spare', so that teams could collect necessary data and a PFA person could stay back if needed. • Following the February 2011 quake, NZRC initiated an outreach service whereby people could call to request a visit for themselves or loved ones. • This operation was coordinated by NZRC and consisted of teams of 2 volunteers visiting between 10-30 homes per week. After working full time for 2-3 months, requests dropped to about 5-10 calls a week. Most visits were conducted to very vulnerable residents who were unaware of or unable to access services. Outreach teams delivered information and PFA and took referrals for specific and critical needs. • This outreach model continued for approximately 12 months and was able to be scaled up/down depending on need. It ran alongside other outreach 'sweeps' targeting specific areas to understand if community needs were being met and to advocate for community where necessary. • Partner agencies include/d CCC, CERA, government agencies and local area health services, as well as specific local businesses or suppliers (depending on resident's rebuilding, transport or other practical needs). • Reports were typically shared with CCC, CERA, government agencies and local area health services.

Kilmore bushfires, Flowerdale, Victoria, 2009. Large scale bushfires in 2009 with multiple deaths in the area and widespread damage. High levels of trauma and displacement experienced by local residents with lengthy rebuilding and recovery activities in place.	• This example pertains to a 3-day outreach operation in October, 2013, almost 5 years after the emergency event. 239 homes were visited, with conversations taking place at 103 properties. • Outreach had occurred here several times in 2009, 2010 and 2011. • Red Cross was approached by Flowerdale Community House to coordinate outreach. Partner agencies included Berry Street, EACH, Family Care and Nexus Primary Health. • The aim of this outreach was to provide personal support to residents of Flowerdale and the surrounding areas who were impacted by the 2009 Bushfires. Volunteers delivered an up-to-date service and community group contact list. Other issue-specific information was provided on a case-by-case basis. • Outreach teams consisted of 2 Red Cross volunteers. • Generally, residents seemed to be doing well with 44% observed to be in good spirits or stating that they were doing okay. 15% of all residents spoken to mentioned that they were new to the area since the 2009 fires with some mentioning that they had made efforts to go along to a community fire information session recently. Positively, there were no serious issues raised and there were no referrals made.
Floods in Ballarat area (Ballarat, Delacombe, Miners Rest, Alfredton), Victoria, 2010-11. Widespread flooding across western and northern Victoria in December 2010 and early 2011 affected more than 3,300 properties and 97 towns.	• This outreach operation occurred over 2 days in November 2011, about 6 months after the event. • This was the second outreach to be conducted in the area. The previous round was in April 2011. • 4 locations identified as flood-affected were visited. 79 properties were visited, with 36 conversations conducted. • Partner agencies were Ballarat City Council and DHHS. • The purpose of the outreach was to provide personal support; to provide and gather information in regards to the local recovery process. • Outreach teams consisted of 2 people – 1 Red Cross volunteer and 1 Ballarat City Council employee. • No referrals were needed as the Council could establish direct contact with the resident at the time of the visit. • Information received from the operation included: considerable evidence of heightened anxiety due to constant rain that had occurred over the 3 days prior to outreach. Almost 17% of people expressed having suffered from stress and psychosocial issues since the floods. Ongoing recovery services were tailored to meet community needs as identified in the outreach report. • The Working Group convened 4 weeks after the operation and concurred no further outreach was required at that time.

Wye River Bushfires, Great Ocean Road, Victoria, December 2015. Fires destroyed 116 homes. Majority of town evacuated due to very effective community action plan. No fatalities or major injuries. Relief centres set up in nearby Lorne and Apollo Bay.	• Approximately 2 days after the event, the Recovery Committee first discussed the possibility of outreach for the purpose of delivering PFA and information gathering. • IIAs were consulted. Due to risks of asbestos, unstable roads, hazardous trees and the fact that most locals were not residing in the town due to road closures, outreach visits did not go ahead. • Telephone outreach was conducted as a partnership between Red Cross and VCCEM in the days following the fires, using information gathered using Register.Find.Reunite. The aim of the calls was to connect in particular with those who had left the area. Calls provided an opportunity to pass on relevant information to those affected and ensure they had access to the support they needed. • Psychosocial support was also provided via community meetings and relief/ recovery centres. A DHHS phone hotline was also in place. • To date, outreach has not occurred in the area but the local LGA is monitoring any ongoing need for outreach.
Lancefield-Cobaw Fires, Victoria, October 2015. A DELWP planned burn became out of control. 148 properties were affected. 4 homes were lost and widespread loss of or damage to fencing, sheds, machinery, livestock, plants and other farming assets. Community members were very distressed and angry and questioned why the fire had been lit during such dry and inappropriate conditions. An independent report later stated that the burn was inadequately planned, inadequately staffed and that DELWP staff did not properly appreciate the risks associated with conducting the burn. DELWP accepted the findings of this report.	• Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MRSC) coordinated outreach with VCCEM and Red Cross volunteers to visit every affected property. • Planning began approximately 2 days after the event. Outreach began approximately 12 days after the event and ran for 3 days. • MRSC is experienced in outreach, having run operations in 2014 and 2015. Arrangements with VCC and Red Cross are pre-determined in the MEMP. In this instance, outreach operations went according to plan. • The purpose of the outreach was to understand the economic impacts to properties and livelihoods; to deliver psychosocial support; to provide information on recovery support and to identify critical or specific needs and link people to appropriate services, via referrals. • 6 Outreach Teams of experienced volunteers from VCCCEM and Red Cross. At the morning briefing teams were given maps marked with resident details. • Visits to heavily affected and isolated properties were prioritised. • Follow ups were conducted to ensure all landholders had been visited. The MRM also continued to check on specific properties and conducted phone outreach to other properties of concern. • Crisisworks was used as the case management system. All information from outreach teams was sent to the Recovery Operations Centre where relevant information was uploaded onto Crisisworks. This outreach operation: • Achieved increased contact and communication between council and affected landholders, including positive feedback from residents about council recovery activities. • Ensured support was quickly and efficiently provided to landholders. • Ensured multiple agencies could access and utilize timely information via Crisisworks. • Allowed for the gathering of missing or incomplete information about individuals and community needs. • Minimised unnecessary or multiple contacts with people.

Part Three
Resources and references

Helpful links and information.

3

Topic	Title	Link/contact
Psychosocial and PFA resources	Australian Psychological Society, Psychosocial Support in Disasters	http://www.psid.org.au/recovery
	Australian Psychological Society, PFA guides	https://www.psychology.org.au/Content.aspx?ID=7127
	Australian Psychological Society and Australian Red Cross, PFA- An Australian Guide	http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Psychological_First_Aid_An_Australian_Guide.pdf
	Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors, Principles of PFA	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dn7fXyIttRY
	Rob Gordon, Acute responses to emergencies: findings and observations of 20 years in the field.	http://volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/MSEV-DHSPD4-Acute-Responses-to-Emergencies-AJEM-0602.pdf
	Rob Gordon, The course of recovery after disaster. (CIMA presentation)	http://www.cima.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Rob-Gordon-The-Course-of-Recovery-after-Disasters.pdf
	Beyondblue, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Factsheet 31	https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety/types-of-anxiety/ptsd
	New Zealand Red Cross presents Dr Rob Gordon.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlvwaDg97XM
	Red Cross, Self Care	http://www.redcross.org.au/self-care.aspx
	War Trauma Foundation, PFA Manual	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgJezWz8x-U
	World Health Organization, PFA: Guide for field workers	http://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/guide_field_workers/en/
	Dr Rob Gordon and DHHS, Travelling the road to recovery: a video series.	http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/emergency-assistance/travelling-the-road-to-recovery-video-series
Government resources	Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2	https://www.ag.gov.au/EmergencyManagement/Respond-and-recover/Documents/aemhs-2-community-recovery.pdf
	Victorian Emergency Management Reform: White Paper, 2012	http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/images/images/featured_dpc/victorian_emergency_management_reform_white_paper_dec2012_web.pdf
	Emergency Management Manual Victoria	https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/policies/emmv/
	DHHS, Psychosocial support: a framework f or emergencies	http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/emergencies-and-preparedness/emergency-recovery/web_Psychosocial-support-a-framework-for-emergencies.pdf
	Attorney General's Department, National Principles for Disaster Recovery	https://www.ag.gov.au/EmergencyManagement/Respond-and-recover/Documents/national-principles-for-disaster-recovery.pdf
	Victoria Better Health, Trauma Reaction and Recovery	https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/trauma-reaction-and-recovery

Government resources (cont'd)	Emergency Relief and Recovery Victoria, Tips on Communicating with the public	http://www.recovery.vic.gov.au/home/general-info-local-councils/tips-communicating-public
	VCC Emergencies Ministry	http://www.vccem.org.au/
	NSW Department of Health, Handbook 2 Psychological First Aid	http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/emergency_preparedness/mental/Documents/handbook-2-PFA.pdf
	DHHS, Managing emotions in emergencies - working with affected people (web page and fact sheet).	http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/emergencies-and-preparedness/emergency-recovery/managing-emotions-in-emergencies-working-with-affected-people
	DHHS, Emergency management training.	http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/workforce,-careers-and-training/workforce-training/emergency-management-training
	DHHS, Emergencies: a website to explain the department's role and services before, during and after emergencies.	https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/emergencies
	DELWP, Recovery programs.	http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/recovery-after-an-emergency/public-land-recovery/recovery-programs
Non-govt resources	Psychosocial Support in Disasters Portal	www.psid.org.au
	Sphere Project for Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response	www.sphereproject.org
	Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, expansive list of current emergency management publications	http://www.bnhcrc.com.au/publications/overview
	Municipal Association Victoria, Resource sharing protocol: a guide for councils.	http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/emergency-management/pages/resource-sharing-protocol.aspx
PFA training	ANU/ Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma Loss and Grief Network	http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/training-conferences
	DHHS	http://hns.dhs.vic.gov.au/pubnetapps/RiemsEMTP/EMTP_MainPage.aspx
	Melbourne University	https://events.unimelb.edu.au/events/6192-psychological-first-aid-workshop
	VCCEM	http://www.vccem.org.au/training/
Red Cross materials and training	Communicating in Recovery (Training and guide book)	http://www.redcross.org.au/training-modules.aspx
	Community Recovery Information Series (Training and guide book)	http://www.redcross.org.au/files/CRIS_Facilitator_Guide.pdf
	Emergency Services Outreach Guidelines	http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Emergency_Services_Outreach_Guidelines.pdf
	Looking after yourself and your family after disaster	http://www.redcross.org.au/files/LookingAfterYourselfand YourFamilyAfterDisaster.pdf

References

Australian Emergency Management Institute, Community Recovery Handbook 2

Australian Psychological Society (2015) Psychosocial Support in Disasters
http://www.psid.org.au/recovery

Comrie, N. (2011) Review of the 2010-11 Flood Warnings & Response. Final Report by Neil Comrie AO, APM. 1 December 2011. State Government of Victoria.
http://www.floodsreview.vic.gov.au/images/stories/documents/review_20101011_flood_warnings_and_response.pdf

Fundamentals of Emergency Management, EMV, 2015, p.13

Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Report 2014

Lessons Learned by Community Recovery, Committees of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, Advice for Government, May 2011

North West Metropolitan Region (2015) Municipal Secondary Impact Assessment Guidelines

State of Victoria (2013) Emergency Relief Handbook: A planning guide 2013, Finsbury Green, Melbourne.

State of Victoria (2014) Psychosocial Support: a framework for emergencies, Finsbury Green, Melbourne.

Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper 2012

World Health Organisation, War Trauma Foundation and World Vision International (2011). Psychological first aid: Guide for Field Workers. WHO: Geneva.

Red Cross Material

Communicating in Recovery, 2010.

Emergency Services Outreach Guidelines, 2015.

Emergency Services Training Toolkit, 2015.

Psychological First Aid, 2013.

Example Outreach Visit Log

Date:	
Outreach Team Initials:	

H – home, resident spoken to

NAH – not at home

V – vacant property

O – other (provide info in comments)

	Property No	Street	Suburb/Town	H, NAH, V, O?	Comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
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30					

Example Outreach Form (Needs Assessment form)

Date ______________	☐ Referral ☐ Revisit ☐ No follow-up ☐ Vacant ☐ No-one home

Number __________	Street ____________________________________	Suburb ____________________________________
Housing Situation:	1) ☐ Original Dwelling **OR** ☐ Relocation	2) ☐ Own Property **OR** ☐ Rental Property
Number in home:	_____ Males _____ Females No. of Adults _____ Approx. ages __________	No. of Children _____ Approx. ages __________

During the Event:	Other Information (Including Referral Information):
☐ The House was impacted ☐ The Property was impacted	
HEALTH - Themes:	
☐ Emotional health issues (pre-existing / post-emergency) ☐ Physical Health issues (pre-existing / post-emergency) ☐ Concern for: family; friends (WHO?)	
SOCIAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - Themes:	
☐ Social isolation ☐ Informal supports (family, friends, group, club, organisation) ☐ Formal supports (GP, counsellor, psychologist)	
PRACTICAL NEEDS - Themes:	
☐ Accommodation (damage/uninhabitable) (temporary/ permanent) ☐ Rebuilding issues (assessment/ permits/ materials/ tradespeople) ☐ Utilities (Power / Water) ☐ Employment/ business issues ☐ Financial Issues (specify: ___________________________) ☐ Clean up Assistance ☐ Fencing damage (labour/ materials) ☐ Farm Issues (Stock loss/Issues with stock/Crop Damage) ☐ Environmental Concerns (tree Clearing, erosion/silt, weeds/replanting) ☐ Insurance I/Legal Issues ☐ Information Pack given ☐ **Resources Used:** After the Emergency (kid's book) __________ Coping with a major personal crisis, Helping children (Information for parents) __________ After the Emergency postcards __________ Trauma Teddies __________	

What do you believe the **strengths** of the community are?
What do you believe the **needs** of the community are?
What support and services in the **future** do you believe your community will need?
How do you feel the **recovery** process has been thus far?
What do you want to become **involved** in within your community?
Outreach Team members to complete: Team Leader (initials): ___________ Team Member (initials): ___________ Length of visit: ___________ mins
For Office Use Only: Referred by Signature ________________________________ Date ___________

Example Outreach Referral Form

Number ___________	Street ___________________________________	Suburb ___________________________________
Household Details:	Name: ___________________________________ Phone Number: ___________________________	Email: ___________________________________ Mobile Number: __________________________
Housing Situation:	1) ☐ Original Dwelling **OR** ☐ Relocation	2) ☐ Own Property **OR** ☐ Rental Property
Number in home:	______ Males ______ Females No. of Adults ______ Approx. ages ___________	 No. of Children ______ Approx. ages __________

Consent to Release Information
I, ___________________________________ (name), agree that this information may be given to other organizations that may assist me and if Red Cross requires further information, they may contact me. ___________________________________ (Signature)

Referral For:

Other Information:

For Office Use Only:

Referred by Signature ___________________________________ Date ___________

Example Outreach Report

Names of activities	
Date(s)	
Location(s)	
Partner agencies	
Report developed by	
Report approved by	
Submitted to & date	

Aim of Activities
Activity Summary

Executive summary	
Location(s):	
Number of properties visited:	
Number of properties with people home/talked to (percentage):	%
Number of referrals:	
Accumulative number of properties visited:	
Accumulative number of properties with people home/talked to (percentage):	%
Accumulative number of referrals: *Note: Accumulative totals may include people visited/spoken to on multiple occasions, estimate provided.	

Themes, issues and notes

Themes					
		Outreach just completed		Accumulative outreach	
Themes		**No. of properties where theme identified**	**Percentage of People spoken to (%)**	**No. of properties where theme identified**	**Percentage of People spoken to (%)**
Health Issues					
Emotional Health Issues	Pre-Existing				
	Post-floods				
Physical Health Issues	Pre-Existing				
	Post-floods				
Concern For	Family				
	Friends				
Social/Community Involvement					
Social Isolation					
Informal Supports	Family				
	Friends				
	Group				
	Club				
	Organisation				
Formal Supports	GP				
	Counsellor				
	Psychologist				
Practical Needs					
Flood Grants	Applied				
	Not Applied				
Financial Counselling					
Clean up assistance post floods					
Other					

Theme identified from observation & conversation					
The house has damage					
The house was inundated by water					
The property was inundated by water					
The house is not habitable					
The power is not connected/requires a power check					
They do not have access to clean drinking water					
The fences are damaged					
Stock loss/issues with stock					
Crop damage					
Insurance Issues	Underinsured				
	No insurance				
	Unsuccessful claim				
	Chose not to claim				
	Payment delayed				

Referrals	
Outreach just completed: Accumulative outreach:	
Volunteers and Staff Engaged	
Number of volunteers engaged:	
Number of staff engaged:	
Number of days completed:	

Example Outreach Coordinator briefing checklist

To be conducted each morning before outreach takes place

Morning

- ☐ Check all outreach packs (folders/ boxes) have all resources/ forms/ stationery and equipment required
- ☐ Organise volunteers into Outreach Teams of two (consider personality, experience, gender)
- ☐ Greet volunteers on arrival
- ☐ Allocate maps and outreach routes to Outreach Teams
- ☐ Allocate outreach packs, vehicles and mobile phones to each Outreach Team (note down mobile numbers, vehicle number plates and outreach route of each team)
- ☐ Give out uniforms, personal protective equipment (high vis vests, wet weather jackets, hats, sunscreen etc) water and snacks
- ☐ Give volunteers time to look through packs, answer any questions, clarify maps
- ☐ Conduct pre departure briefing (consider using SMEACS)
- ☐ Introduce community/ partner agency speaker (if appropriate)
- ☐ Ensure Outreach Teams know where and when to meet for lunch
- ☐ Answer questions

Lunch

- ☐ Meet Outreach Teams for lunch (if appropriate)
- ☐ Update maps and outreach routes for afternoon if required
- ☐ Check that outreach packs have enough resources for afternoon, replenish if required
- ☐ Give each team a time to return to base for afternoon debrief

Debrief

- ☐ Collect outreach packs/ uniforms from team
- ☐ Collect needs assessment, visit log and referral forms from team
- ☐ Go through each needs assessment form, discuss and clarify any questions, add further detail if required
- ☐ Go through visit log, clarify any questions
- ☐ Discuss any challenging situations the team faced, how they were managed and what lessons may be learned
- ☐ Discuss team's self-care strategy and identify, further support required and plan

End of day

- ☐ Collect all needs assessment forms for collation into outreach report
- ☐ Collect all referral forms, forward to relevant agency if appropriate or store securely to be forwarded at the end of the outreach
- ☐ Assess visit logs and maps, plan maps and outreach routes for following day (if required)
- ☐ Send visit log and visit statistics through to operations team for inclusion in daily sit rep (if during activation)
- ☐ Inform Outreach Teams of meeting time for the following morning (if required)
- ☐ Re-stock all outreach packs

Example Outreach Coordinator briefing checklist

Briefing checklist (to be undertaken alone or with a community or partner organization representative) SMEAC

Situation

- ☐ Local community information
- ☐ Event information
- ☐ General community reaction, any identified needs, themes, concerns
- ☐ Previous outreach in the area
- ☐ Other services/ activities in the area

Mission

- ☐ Partner agency details
- ☐ Services available for referrals
- ☐ Information to be distributed
- ☐ Potential questions, themes, needs to be aware of

Execution

- ☐ Outreach Team
- ☐ Map and outreach route allocation
- ☐ Vehicle allocation
- ☐ Phone number of Outreach Coordinator
- ☐ Time and venue to meet for lunch
- ☐ Weather forecast, distribution of PPE

Administration

- ☐ Check all outreach packs
- ☐ Familiarisation with resources and information to be distributed
- ☐ Check equipment, phones etc all working

Communications

- ☐ Note each teams phone number
- ☐ Ensure each team has Outreach Coordinator's phone number
- ☐ Other key phone numbers eg- lifeline, kids help line local council, service agency phone numbers

Safety

- ☐ Any locally specific safety considerations (eg road conditions, damaged infrastructure)
- ☐ Reiterate that Outreach Team safety is number one priority

Questions

- ☐ Answer any questions- refer teams to outreach guidelines where possible and appropriate