

4 May 2017

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Local Government Victoria  
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning  
PO Box 500  
MELBOURNE VIC 8002

Dear [REDACTED],

**Submission from the Hume Region Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group - Council and Emergencies Directions Paper**

The Hume Region MEMEG resolved at its meeting of March this year to make a submission on the Council and Emergencies Direction Paper.

While Local Government Victoria is to be commended for carrying out the '*Local Government in emergencies*' project, including a thorough review of the role of municipal government in emergency management, the Directions paper has a range of areas for improvement.

We anticipate that many Council submissions will focus on the detail of Council's roles and responsibilities as outlined within the 154 key areas and for that reason the HR MEMEG resolved to focus on the principles as outlined within the Directions Paper.

We consider the principles for local government in emergency management to be significant. By way of suggestion we recommend that once the principles are finalised and agreed to they are placed towards the front of any final document. These principles underpin and 'drive' the direction of emergency management for local government and it is important that they are in the opening sections of any document or policy.

Our submission is that five of the six principles as outlined are broadly supported. We do however submit that the role of the principles has been understated in discussions and through the consultative process to date. There would be benefit from further sector wide consultation focussed on these principles and ensuring there is broad agreement and sector wide 'buy in'.

We disagree with the principle that a Council's emergency management responsibilities and actions should, "*Complement those of other agencies, businesses and the public*".

Adoption of this as a principle has the potential to contradict the principles immediately before and after and may complicate any processes that determine the emergency management role of local government.

It is unlikely there will be agreement between municipal councils and the emergency service agencies on what this principle means and how and when it should be applied. It is also considered that adoption of this principal may lead to continued uncertainty around what are the emergency management functions of local government.

Local Government in Victoria has experienced significant role creep over the past few years and this extends to emergency management. This sees the sector undertaking functions that are outside of what is seen as normal council business as well as entirely on behalf of other agencies and organisations.

Examples that are commonly cited but continue to be relevant include council as a third party being requested by another agency to source and maintain equipment and resources ranging from catering to heavy plant. Councils are also required to undertake fire management activities as a delegated authority under the CFA Act (schedule 13 permits, the development and maintenance of municipal fire prevention plans and fire plug inspections). Council is also a key agent within the DEWLP Water Replacement Policy and the DELWP Emergency Water Supply Points Policy (Drought Bore network) with both of these activities having the potential to significantly impact budgets in a cost constrained environment.

The HR MEMEG looks forward to participating in further consultation on the Councils and Emergencies project and seeing the outcomes from the Directions Paper review.

If you have any queries on this submission please don't hesitate to contact me by email at [REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]@wangaratta.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@wangaratta.vic.gov.au) or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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[REDACTED] **Hume Region Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group**