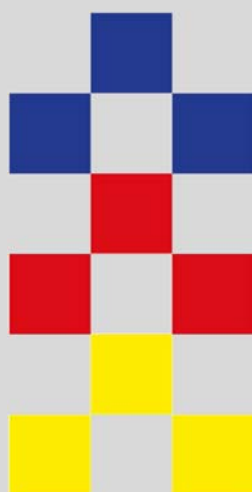


# Incident Management with the Private Sector

Collaboration, Consequence  
Management or Corporate Survival?



EMERGENCY  
SERVICES  
FOUNDATION

This report has been prepared as part of the 2018  
Emergency Services Foundation scholarship program

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## Document Control

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### Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

- Emergency Services Foundation - Board
- Emergency Services Foundation – Chief Executive Officer Siusan MacKenzie
- Emergency Services Foundation – Executive Officer Jenny Davis
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- Country Fire Authority – Chief Executive Officer Dr Paul Smith
- Country Fire Authority – Chief Officer Steven Warrington AFSM



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## 1. Executive Summary

The relationship between the public and private sector has evolved over the last 40 years, driven by an increase in the frequency and complexity of emergencies and the growing privatisation of services previously provided by the public sector. Despite this relationship change, the expectations of the community have remained relatively stable – an expectation that in their time of need, support will be required and they will be able to return to normality.

Victoria's emergency management sector has itself evolved significantly over the past 10 years, driven in no small part by the recommendations of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission and the Victorian Floods Review. Whilst this evolution has led to greater cooperation and integration across many government agencies and support services, limited work has been undertaken at a strategic, cross-sector level to understand the role that the private sector plays in the modern emergency management environment.

To understand how the evolution of the private sector may compliment the continuing developments of emergency management in Victoria, research was undertaken in the United States and United Kingdom in the form of meetings, tours and semi-structured interviews with lead participants from both the public and private sector.

Strong models of success are currently in operation in parts of the United States and areas of the United Kingdom. Each model is unique and adaptive. These successful models occur when the connection between the public sector, private sector, non-government organisations and community is maintained on a regular basis and effort is made by all parties to share information, situational awareness and organisational insights. Trusted networks increase the chances of achieving tailored outcomes and reduce the need for relationship development during critical phases of response and recovery.

Whilst the traditional approach to managing a public/private sector relationship would involve agreements, memoranda of understanding and detailed expectations, successful operating models are more likely to occur when flexibility is maintained in the approach to solving issues. The detail-heavy documentation of the public sector can act as a barrier at times when success is measured by the timeliness and appropriateness of response.

The research established that the structures and culture established in Victoria are similar to those found in the United States and United Kingdom. This means that a step towards developing meaningful and successful relationships with the private sector may not be as big (or challenging) as some would expect. There is an opportunity for Victoria to embrace the benefits of such a relationship and integrate it into our evolving emergency management environment. The active and dedicated management of such a relationship would be critical to its success.



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## 2. Introduction

The relationship between emergency management agencies and the private sector has reached a critical point. The complexity and frequency of emergencies continues to increase (Deacon & Doyle, 2017), resulting in an impact not only to the community, but to commercial entities and private industry. There is also an increased focus on integrated emergency management from state government agencies (irrespective of hazard), with the identification of the business sector as a key partner in emergency management. Emergency Management Victoria's role statement includes references to 'shared responsibilities' and the need to embed emergency management 'across government, agencies and business' (Emergency Management Victoria, 2014).

Over the last 30 years, an international trend towards the privatisation of public sector services has emerged (Handmer, 2000). This transition has also seen the focus of risk reduction and emergency management shift from a community and service focus to a corporate liability and financial risk (Handmer, 2000). Many commercial entities have already recognised the need to plan for emergency events.

Private sector entities also have a large untapped potential to help provide skilled services in form of technical manpower or in-kind donations of goods or services for preparedness & emergency response phase of disaster management.

This report details the studies undertaken in October 2018 as part of the Emergency Service Foundation scholarship program. The key focus of the study was to gain an understanding of the emergency management arrangements and relationships that exists to support the public/private sector relationship and how such arrangements could apply to Victoria.



### 3. Acknowledgments

This research was an incredible success, due in part to the generosity of those listed below and their willingness to discuss the role they play in the public/private partnership.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Abigail L. Browning	Chief, Office of Private Sector/ NGO Coordination	CA Governor's Office of Emergency Services
Alan Parker	Station Manager - Response and Resilience	Scottish Fire and Rescue Services
Ann Lesperance	Director	Northwest Region Technology Center (NWRTC)
Catriona Forrest	Knowledge Exchange, part of project team	National Centre for Resilience, Scotland
Emily M. T. Saulsgiver	Associate	Science and Technology Directorate, Homeland Security
Graham Tucker	CSSC Project Director	Cross-sector Safety & Security Communications Initiative
Grant Tietje	Senior Project Manager	Northwest Region Technology Center (NWRTC)
Iain Campbell		Scottish Government - Resilience Division
Jason Jackson	Senior Director, Global Emergency Management	Walmart
Jon Parker	Station Manager, Special Operations Group	London Fire Brigade
Jono Anzalone	Global Partnerships Manager	Airbnb
Josh Allen	Senior Manager Global Security, Emergency Operations Center	Walmart
Justin Dombrowski	Program Manager, Global Disaster Response	Apple
Kellie Bentz	Head, Global Disaster Response & Relief Efforts	Airbnb
Manuela Roedler	Emergency Planning Officer	London Resilience
Michael Cummings	Private Sector Liaison	Federal Emergency Management Agency (Region 9)
Monika Stoeffl	Executive Director	California Resiliency Alliance
Ralph Throp	Head of Community Resilience Policy	Scottish Government - Resilience Division

Additionally, it would not have been possible to undertake this research with the support in Australia of Siusan MacKenzie and Jenny Davis from the Emergency Services Foundation, Alen Slijepcevic and Stephen Walls from the Country Fire Authority, Mark Swiney from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Craig Shepherd from Victoria Police and Craig Lapsley. The support of this group enabled me to embrace the topic and ensured that I made the most of opportunity offered to me by the foundation.



## 4. Overview of scholarship research

The program of study was intended to explore the emergency management arrangements and operational facilities where there is an established relationship (physical co-location, virtual engagement or legislative requirement) between public and private sector response to emergency management.

The organisations visited were in locations that shared similar risk and hazard profiles to Victoria and where large private sector entities were engaged in the response and recovery to events.

United States of America	United Kingdom
<p><i>California</i>                      California Office of Emergency Services                      California Resiliency Alliance                      Federal Emergency Management Agency                      Region IX</p> <p><i>Arkansas</i>                      Walmart Emergency Operations Centre</p> <p><i>District of Columbia</i>                      Department of Homeland Security                      Airbnb</p>	<p><i>England</i>                      London Resilience                      Cross-sector Safety &amp; Security                      Communications                      Transport for London                      London Fire Brigade</p> <p><i>Scotland</i>                      Resilience Division, Scottish Government                      Scottish Fire &amp; Rescue Service</p>

To support the purpose of engaging with the above organisations, four focus areas were identified to ensure maximum benefit was gained from each visit. The focus areas were:

- Focus area 1 - the physical location and operating structures of facilities;
- Focus area 2 - the establishment and operation of an emergency operations centre for private sector usage;
- Focus area 3 - the implementation of private sector management of public sector services and the impacts this has on service delivery;
- Focus area 4 relates to assessing integrated management structures for public and private sector emergency management planning and response.

At the core of the discussion with each organisation was the question ‘why are you doing this?’. For many of the private sector representatives, the collective social conscience of their business, their workforce and their shareholders was the highest motivating factor that was driving their involvement. For the public sector, the connection to the workforces of private sector organisations meant that they were connecting with their community, albeit via an alternative channel. Whilst many organisations recognised that there may be some commercial benefit through the publicity any major support attracts, it was recognised that any action that supports relief and a faster transition to recovery and normality is likely to be worth the trade-off of the perceived benefit of publicity.

The success of many of the relationships reviewed during this research was attributed almost entirely to communication and the reality that in these types of relationships, procedures and standard actions don’t work - relationship management does. Regular information sharing, including provision of situational awareness documentation is vital. This communication is two-way and can be initiated through regular contact (one-to-one, such as established by CalOES or at a group level, such as the weekly teleconferences led by London Resilience). CalOES

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also rely heavily on their Chief of NGO and Private Sector Coordination to maintain these relationships on an ongoing basis, rather than tasking someone who is already busy with more work – or worse still, waiting until the emergency occurs to try and establish relationships.

Through the regular sharing of information, business can become advocates (because they understand the message) and act as major communication channels - potentially all the way to the customer at a checkout. Some of the key preparedness messaging can be supported by distribution within the vast network of stores and outlets operated by business. In some situations, the generation and printing of collateral has also been funded by the private sector, such as members of Scotland's Business Emergency Resilience Group.

Whilst agreements and memoranda of understanding were recognised to serve a purpose, both public and private sector partners advocated for these to be simple, principle based document between main collaborators. The private sector identifies itself as a set of industries that adapt to disruption on a regular basis and therefore seek a relationship that is supported by communications, not procedures.

Coupled with the need for strong and regular communication is the reality that in larger countries, particularly for organisations such as Walmart or Airbnb, trusted networks will be utilised as the primary communication method. Although this places demand on key individuals in the respective organisation, it does reduce the risk of a 'missed opportunity'. All parties were accepting of the fact that businesses don't have time to try and understand the multiple layers of government and the splits across district and regional borders. Conversely, a local responder agency may be hesitant to deal with big companies, fearful of a conflict with an agency procurement policy or the like.

In some cases, large scale communications are appropriate, particularly for the sharing of situational awareness. The Cross-sector Safety & Security Communications initiative in the United Kingdom allows for broadcast notifications to occur to industry members, providing them with timely information. It was however observed that a request for assistance from the public sector to the private sector is best channelled directly from a trusted source to individual or groups of businesses.

In the situations where a relationship has not been previously established, the public sector representative should be equipped to make an approach to the private sector with confidence. Given their global status, Airbnb recognised that as a private sector organisation receiving an initial call, they need to be open to the initial approach and listen to the needs of the other party without making assumptions. There is an element of trust across all relationships – new or established – that is necessary to ensure that the focus remains on the emergency at hand and that neither party feels that the other is trying to take advantage of the situation.

As the demand for private sector participation increases (driven both by internal and external influences), the sector has sought to clarify that the same businesses won't always play the same role. There may be a specific connection to a community or a business demand that drives their response to a situation. There is benefit therefore in equipping key staff for the conversations that need to be had with businesses and an understanding of shared outcomes. There are key points throughout an emergency where businesses have transitioned from seeking a business critical outcome or community recovery outcomes to seeking a return to their normal operating model. Any partnership established needs to be mature enough to recognise that the commitment of responder agencies and business assets will evolve and that as priorities shift, so will the specific provisions and support of that emergency.



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It was well recognised in addition to the considerations above, each community is different and so the response needs to be different and the role (and significance of the work) under taken by private sector will change. Sometimes, the support that the public sector or a specific community may not be financial or physical. Airbnb have supported outreach and connection with Airbnb guests in affected areas, which is particularly beneficial in instances where emergency notifications systems vary across county and state boundaries or the guests are unfamiliar with the challenges of the situation they are in.

The challenges of complying with government procurement do not appear to be as difficult as many would assume. All parties acknowledged that there are occasions where free supplies may be provided in the early stages of an incident because it simply achieves a better outcome – support to the community, rather than the parties trying to strike a contract. The maturity of a relationship between the requesting agency and the business is a key-driver for when ‘free stuff’ ends and appropriate procurement kicks in. Above all, the provision of resources remains at the discretion of the business.

The physical location of the teams that support the management of private sector support during emergencies is fluid and much of the work is conducted virtually. Many businesses are located some distance from where the incident is occurring or may be handling multiple requests for assistance across multiple jurisdictions. They do not see the benefit of attending a physical facility in an emergency affected area to conduct specific business, as they are continuing to operate the daily functions of their business and need to be in a location that allows them to do this.

Walmart most commonly coordinate their activities from the Emergency Operations Centre in Arkansas, but may dispatch one of their staff to a state operations centre if the demand on their team is significant. This is an exception to the rule and can occur due to the sheer size of the Walmart operation and the staff who operate in the emergency management team.

Some EOCs may also choose to operate remotely and in some instances, may work from home. During the 'Beast for the East' severe weather that impacted London in early 2018, staff were actively encouraged not to travel to central London and instead were able to conduct their coordination duties from home locations. This model supports situations where scheduled communications such as teleconferences occur rather than ad-hoc, face-to-face style communications.

Some private sector representatives indicated that irrespective of the model of operation, the maturity of any relationship or the physical location of their public sector partners, there needs to be a degree of outreach from the public sector to the private sector so that work isn't done in isolation. Once again, this doesn't mean face-to-face contact or co-location, but it does mean that communication channels need to be active.

The size of organisations should not stop private sector involvement. In Scotland, the formation of national police and fire services led to a reduction in the connection with the private sector. The larger workforces that overnight became more agile due to the reduction in cross-service resource requesting, resulted in a return to public sector led responses with limited private sector engagement. As a result, the operating models seen in London and parts of the United States are less mature in Scotland.

Despite this, the capacity of the larger fire and police services has resulted in these organisations taking a lead in supporting community-based initiatives. The Community Asset Register allows community members (including small business) to support local response to emergencies. The location and availability of resources that can support a variety of response scenarios is captured in a basic web-based tool that is accessible by control room operators in



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Scotland. The system is intended to evolve into a portal allows any Category 1 agency (police, fire, ambulance, council and health services) to dispatch resources. In future versions, the register has the potential to identify nationally available assets, which could support integration with larger private sector entities.

The journey towards a mature working relationship across public and private sector partners is one that has varied in each of the locations that were visited as part of this research. There are discrete political elements at play in each location, coupled with the varying maturity of the emergency management arrangements that are in place in these locations. The reality is that not everyone is on the same page. Sometimes, the best outcomes are achieved by a collaboration between state, federal and industry representative bodies. This means the focus is less on following the process and more on finding the right answer. In some cases, this might mean that the private sector takes the lead on some elements of the work required. A mature approach to this arrangement also recognises that whilst a business benefits from the publicity of responding to a large emergency, this may sometimes be worth the trade off in respect to the supplies and support provided.

The ultimate outcome of these relationships is that a community is supported before, during and after an emergency through meaningful collaboration between the public and private sector. An important consideration throughout the lifecycle of the relationship is that just because the public and private sector can 'do things' that appear to support a community, these actions must support community agility or resilience. A critical failure of these support models would be a reduction in the resilience of a community and an increased reliance on public or private sector support.



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## 5. Conclusion

Strong and collaborative partnerships between the public and private sector have resulted in positive outcomes for a variety of emergencies across the United States and United Kingdom. These partnerships have been facilitated through reaching a common understanding of the respective capabilities held within organisations and the best way to access support when required.

These relationships are conducted in a non-traditional manner – they rely strongly on communication and the agility of the organisations involved. A traditional, procedural based approach to these activities is likely to result in outcomes that don't fully meet the needs of the impacted communities.

Given the significant development of Victoria's emergency management arrangements over the past 10 years, there is a strong chance that adopting a public/private sector partnership model would result in good outcomes for communities. The challenge to develop such a model is not solely a matter of generating the relationship between the public and private sector, but also supporting culture change in the traditional elements of government (procurement guidelines, partnership arrangements) and the elements of the private sector that may need significant encouragement to participate in a program that doesn't have documented outcomes – and that may have a variety of tangible benefits dependent upon the nature of the emergency.



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## 6. Recommendations

1. That EMV and partner agencies establish oversight of formal connections with the private sector, coordinated by a senior sector leader (equivalent to the Chief of NGO/Private Sector at CalOES);
2. That the appointed leader focus on connections that provide meaningful relationships with identified partners via regular collaboration and information sharing. As part of this process, an understanding should be gained in terms of what capability exists within the private sector and the associated resilience demands;
3. That the appointed leader work with DTF to strengthen understanding of the needs of emergency management partners and private sector partners so that procurement headaches don't prevent us from providing support to communities before, during and after emergencies;
4. In conjunction with local brigades, units and community groups, seek to support the utilisation of local capacity (local business etc) and capture this knowledge.



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## 7. References

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