

Emergency Management Risk Communication Project

**Final report to the
Department of Human Services
January 2006**

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**Emergency Management Risk Communication: Final Report
January 2006**

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Report of the Emergency Management Risk Communication Project

1. Context of the study

The public health component of the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) includes a number of units with specific responsibilities that are activated during state, national or international emergencies. The emergencies may be activated by chemical, biological or radiological hazards and may happen because of a naturally occurring event, accident or deliberate act of terrorism.

Ensuring the safety of the Victorian population is of paramount importance to the public health component of DHS, which includes the environment, health and communicable diseases units.

Effective communication with a diverse general public is of utmost importance in ensuring safety. However, previous research has noted that members of the general public do not always behave in ways advised by emergency professionals. This project was designed to identify ways of communicating more effectively and appropriately with the general public prior to, during and after emergency situations.

To establish a background picture of emergency management risk communication in Victoria two significant emergencies, the Longford gas plant accident in 1998 and the 2002-03 Victorian bushfires, were selected for review. They were chosen because each was subject to multiple inquiries and the reports from those inquiries are available for review. The report of this review is attached as Appendix 1.

The consequences of the Longford gas plant accident were widespread and extended over a period of three weeks. The public health risks ranged from potential accidents from gas explosions to personal and public hygiene. Risk communication was extensive. Despite the public health risks and the need for extensive and effective communication, very little analysis of this aspect of the emergency was undertaken in the inquiries. However, a review of communication performance of health agencies was undertaken by DHS and resulted in a *DHS State level plan for the management of emergencies and other critical events*, which included an *Information and communication strategic plan*. This plan focused on the structures for effective communication but did not explore, in any depth, characteristics of the Victorian community relevant to effective communication.

Bushfires are a major natural disaster event and they occur every year in Victoria. The 2002-03 Victorian bushfires were the most extensive for 60 years and subject to numerous inquiries. The public health risks of bushfires include burn injuries, respiratory illness, water contamination and longer-term mental health issues. The lead agency in bushfire communications is the Country Fire Authority (CFA). The CFA does not generally feature public health information in its communications.

Some major recommendations emerging from the reviews of the 2002-03 bushfires were:

- a. Communication with the public should be a primary responsibility of incident management rather than a subsidiary issue.
- b. Communication with the public should not only inform them of what has occurred but what to expect next.
- c. Communication with the public should be viewed as a community engagement process that establishes continuing communication links that can be enhanced during an incident. The CFA does this through its Community Safety Directorate and it was recommended that the Department of Sustainability and Environment establish similar arrangements.

In 2004 the Victorian government and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) established a formal protocol under which the ABC would interrupt normal broadcasting to communicate emergency messages as required by emergency services. This arrangement established the ABC as a key information channel during emergencies.

The emphasis in post 2002-03 bushfire communications was on accuracy of information and the use of innovative technologies for communication. Gaps remain in our understanding of the diverse Victorian community, their emergency information needs and preferred channels of communication.

2. Approach taken to the study

This project has 5 components. A report on each component is appended to this document so that details of methods and findings are available to readers. A synthesis of what was learned constitutes the body of the report. The synthesis is brief and focused on the application of what has been learned to emergency risk communication action in Victoria.

The five components are:

- a. Two risk communication case studies of emergencies that have been systematically reviewed to extract key lessons that might inform future public health risk communication action (appendix 1).
- b. Newspaper analysis. Surveillance of environmental risks and hazards reported in selected Victorian state and regional newspapers (appendix 2).
- c. Survey of ABC and commercial radio broadcaster's recognition of authority in relation to emergency broadcasts (appendix 3).
- d. Scenarios of public health hazards and typical communications were tested with focus groups from key segments of the Victorian population for their responses. (appendices 4.1 and 4.2)
- e. Market testing of DHS information sheets (appendix 5).
- f. Emergency risk communication bibliography (appendix 6).

This report is divided into three major sections:

- a. Perspectives on risk
- b. Communicating risk: perspectives on communication and the media
- c. Operationalising risk communication lessons

3. Perspectives on risk

Perspectives on risk were explored in the focus groups held with different community segments. Scenarios were used to generate discussion. The scenarios were structured stories of hypothetical, but realistic, emergencies to which the focus groups were asked to respond.

People differentiate between risk to self and risk to the community. When risk to self and risk to community were combined into an overall assessment, 80% of English speaking focus group participants and 82% of non-English speaking background (NESB), considered the scenario situations to pose some or a great deal of risk.

As might be expected given the refugee status of a number of NESB participants, they perceive situations as more risky to self than to the community, whereas the reverse is the case for non-NESB participants. The NESB group may be more fearful of emergencies in a community where their local experience is relatively new and their ability to operate effectively in the dominant language and culture is variable. NESB participants identified few memberships in community organizations that might provide information and support in an emergency. Those that identified membership nominated ethnic community organizations such as the mosque.

Men and women assess risk differently. The largest differences between men and women are in their assessment of the level of risk posed by a scenario. Few men assessed the risks of the scenarios as very great either to themselves or to the community. Women are more than twice as likely as men to assess events as being very risky for the community. Women's greater assessment of risk may be due to them having less experience of emergency situations, emergency services and the outcomes of the event. Another influence may be that men are more likely to participate in community organizations than women. Participation in community organizations tended to reduce perceptions of risk both to self and to the community.

Perception of risk may be associated with responsibility for others. Actions are influenced by such responsibilities. The responsibilities of focus group participants were: preschool children (31%), school age children (31%), grandchildren (8%), elderly people (15%), disabled people (10%), pets (58%), and livestock (19%). The proportion of people with responsibilities for pets was more than 20% larger than for children! None of the NESB participants had responsibility for livestock and only 3 had responsibility for pets. Responsibility for pre-school children, grandchildren and livestock led to the greatest perception of risk to self from the emergency scenario; when 'some risk' and 'great deal of risk' perceptions are added, however, it is only those with pre-school children and pets who rate the risk as greater than those without that responsibility.

In summary, responsibility for children, pets, and in rural areas livestock, enhanced people's concerns in the scenario situations.

A full discussion of risk perceptions can be found in the report of the focus groups which is attached as Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

4. Communicating risk: Perspectives on communication and the media

Perspective of the general public on communication

Perspectives on communication were explored in the focus groups held with different community segments. Scenarios were used to generate discussion of typical messages. The scenarios were structured stories of hypothetical, but realistic, emergencies that had the following elements:

- an emergency situation described at two points in time
- hypothetical communications at each point in time including the source (organisation), messages and media
- relevant elements of existing Emergency Management Plans

The general public holds diverse views about risk communication that tend to form patterns around demographic variables. Young people in their teenage years are a unique group with a perspective that is different from that of other groups and require particular attention if they are to be communicated with effectively.

Focus group participants' prior experience of emergency situations was explored as it may affect their risk perceptions, their behaviour in an emergency, their knowledge of information sources and their evaluation of the trustworthiness of those sources. There were clear differences in past experience of emergencies. Half of the non-NESB participants had past experience of an emergency although this may have been a long time ago. One third of NESB participants had prior experience of an emergency. This may have been in their country of origin and may have been of incidents uncommon in Australia, such a war, but may also have been of events occurring in Australia, such as flood. Men were more likely to have prior experience than women, and the likelihood of experience rose with age, reaching its maximum in the 50-59 year age group for non-NESB people and 40-49 year group for NESB people. Importantly, the more remote an area in which participants lived the more likely they were to have prior experience of emergencies. Differences between Council areas were statistically significant.

Responsibility for other people and for animals made a difference to people's perspective on emergencies. People with responsibility for school age children and for livestock were most likely to have experience of emergencies, those with responsibility for pre-school children and grandchildren were least likely to. **This data suggests that parents of very young children and older people with responsibility for grandchildren may need particular attention in terms of clarity of messages and effective channels of communication.**

Participants were asked to identify the information sources they found useful in prior emergency situations. **For both men and women, ABC and local radio was clearly considered to have been the most useful source of information, followed by emergency services. For men, individuals with local experience of the emergency were important.** The difference between men and women was statistically significant at

the 5% level. Local councils and television were not mentioned as sources of useful information in prior emergency episodes.

Participants were asked to name the most important sources of information about things happening in the community. Knowledge of this is important both for education campaigns about risk and for directing information during an emergency. The most frequently used media sources by non-NESB participants were: ABC local radio (41%), ABC TV (48%) and local newspaper (64%). Of these ABC local radio was most heavily used by people in the 40-59 year age groups, ABC TV was used by all age groups, and local newspapers were used most heavily by 40-59 year age groups although the groups under 40 years used them to some extent. The under 20 years age group most frequently used ABC TV, followed by the Sun newspaper, Channel 10 TV & local newspapers, followed by Commercial FM radio. Neither local FM nor community radio was used by many people and in the focus groups disparaging comments were made about them. Other sources of information frequently used by non-NESB men and women were: family, friends and neighbors (25%), email/internet (18%), emergency services (18%) and Council spokesperson (14%). There is a tendency for men to go to 'official sources' and for women to go to community organizations.

In the focus groups conducted with NESB community members there was a preference for information by word of mouth through credible NESB community leaders and NESB community organizations. Schools were considered a good source of information for families with children, and in some localities councils were a respected source of information.

If a source of information is trusted, people will consider the information provided by that source to be reliable. It is considered to be accurate and people can be confident acting upon it. It is not possible to say that any particular source of emergency information is most trusted. There are substantial differences between demographic groups in their judgments of trustworthiness of any particular source. In some instances local experience of a source will influence judgments. For example, in one rural town the local newspaper was considered to be politically partisan and untrustworthy, whilst in most other localities the local paper was considered a good source of information.

The factors that empower people to act in emergencies are:

- a. **Accurate and timely information on protective action**
- b. **Previous knowledge or experience of the risk**
- c. **Trust in the information source**
- d. **Social networks that can be called upon for information and support**
- e. **Pre-emergency knowledge of help-lines and other sources of information**

A detailed discussion of the public's perspective on communication is found in the report of the focus groups which is attached as Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

Newspaper analysis

A total of 516 newspapers were analysed for content about health, and environmental health in particular. All available copies of the three major metropolitan newspapers in Victoria, together with local daily and weekly newspapers from Metropolitan Melbourne, East Gippsland and the Shepparton areas were collected during the period May, June and July 2004. Newspaper coverage of public health issues is a useful indicator of public awareness, or literacy, of public health risks.

During the study period 3299 articles on health were published, 15% of them about environmental health. Environmental health issues were most frequently reported by metropolitan dailies or regional papers, and least frequently by local metropolitan weeklies. Environmental health issues most frequently appeared in the press as news reports. The second most common type of article was an in-depth analysis followed by letters to the editor. The content of the environmental health articles appearing in the press was categorized: general environmental (40%), biological (22%), chemical (19%), radiological (10%), and terrorism and security (9%).

In the content analysis the causes, consequences and actions by stakeholders on the problem were assessed. The cause of the problem was identified in 60% of articles, the consequences in 58%, and actions by stakeholders were mentioned in 82% of articles. **These findings suggest that environmental health reporting in newspapers focused on what happened, rather than on how and why it happened.** Almost half of articles were after the event (44%), and a further 31% described the event or problem while it was happening. Just 21% were about possible events or problems, including information about what to do should an event arise and risk management plans. Flood, fire, security and hygiene were the main topics dealt with in this manner. The source of 66% of articles appeared to be an individual(s) (e.g. journalist) and 32% appear to have originated with an institution such as government or council press releases. Although the number of articles by named journalists was high, very few were by accredited environmental or health reporters. **This finding suggests that messages should be framed on the assumption that the journalist preparing stories are unlikely to be well informed about public health issues.**

Articles were rated for evoked fear or dread and uncertainty. The overwhelming number of articles presented issues of low or medium dread (76%). **According to these articles communicable disease is the most fearful event (75% of articles present it as high or very high), followed by fire, toxic waste, security and chemical hazard.** Three quarters of articles presented low to medium levels of uncertainty. This is in the context of nearly half the articles being written after the event when the outcome is known.

Four distinct narrative styles were used in the news reports and in-depth accounts.

- Straight information/reportage. In this style events are reported as what happened to whom, when and where and may be followed by a reassuring message for the public.
- Simplistic but even handed presentation of point(s) of view. There is evidence that a number of sources have been consulted but there is a scant attempt at evaluating the sources and the implications of the event for the future. It is difficult for a reader to make sense of the event or its consequences.
- Presentation of points of view with critical narrative. In this style of article information is critically assessed and implications are apparent.

- Action-oriented. These articles are polemical, arguing for action to be taken or are sympathetically portraying activists.

The different styles of articles are important for what the reader would be likely to understand about the issue, the risks involved, and the actions to be taken based on the articles. Different newspapers tended to emphasise different styles.

The time orientation of articles is also significant. Articles:

- dealt with what happened in the last 24 hours regarding a particular event; and,
- rarely followed up on a story.

If an issue receives widespread coverage over an extended period of time there is a greater chance of the public engaging in discussion of the risk, gaining familiarity with the issues and potential actions they might take.

In summary:

- There is generally a great deal of difference between the Herald-Sun and other metropolitan daily newspapers in the way in which the narrative content of articles is developed.
- The majority of Herald-Sun articles canvas a range of perspectives or viewpoints and present these in summary form, rather than as a sequential debate.
- The Age and The Australian, whilst often canvassing the same viewpoints, present more detailed information, especially giving background to the issues and/or reasons for the problem, enabling the reader to place the narrative into a more comprehensive context.
- The local and rural papers tend to be more personalised with both local stakeholder views presented in detail, and photographs, but they also tend to give more preventive and usable information on events/issues than the metropolitan dailies.

A full report of the newspaper analysis can be found in Appendix 2.

Radio station survey

Victorian metropolitan and regional radio station staff were surveyed about the station's mechanisms for dealing with emergency communications. Twenty-three out of the 27 broadcasters who were members of the key industry bodies were approached. They included all 6 Local ABC stations (Melbourne and four regional broadcasters) and 17 commercial stations (four metropolitan and 13 regional stations). Fifteen agreed to participate giving a 65% response rate.

This component of the research was a survey of a cross-section of radio broadcasting stations (ABC and commercial) to gain information about the way in which broadcasters recognize an authority in regard to emergency interruption of broadcasting routines. The key questions were: Who has the power to request a broadcast statement in the public interest during an emergency? and, Who has the power to ask broadcasters to act in the public interest during an emergency? These questions are important because if authorities are to use radio for communication during emergencies they must know how to intervene in radio broadcast routines and appeal to the common values in the medium to have messages broadcast. Public health agencies need to be accepted as authoritative and trusted sources of information for broadcasting.

Existing arrangements with radio broadcasters can be summarized in the following two statements.

The Memorandum of Understanding between ABC Victoria and Victorian Emergency Services Organisations states that:

ABC Local Radio Victoria is to operate a telephone 'hotline' which can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by any person authorized by Emergency Services. This 'hotline' will provide ready access to senior and experienced staff at ABC Local Radio who are authorized to broadcast on any or all of the Victorian transmitters operated by ABC Local Radio.

Section 8 of the commercial radio *Code of Practice* is about the broadcast of emergency information. The two key items are:

- 8.2 A licensee will, in consultation with appropriate emergency and essential service organisations, implement a set of internal procedures to enable the timely and accurate broadcast of warnings and information supplied by such organisation relating to an existing or threatened emergency.*
- 8.3 A designated position in relation to each station is to be identified as the contact officer during business and non-business hours for all matters relative to this code.*

Radio station staff were clear that certain agencies had the authority to ask broadcasters to make announcements or act in the public interest. The agencies with authority were police, SES and fire authorities. Neither local journalists nor the station emergency contact officer were thought to have authority in emergencies. This was particularly clear in commercial stations, less clear in the ABC. Senior management in the ABC had the authority to request broadcasts on the ABC in the public interest. In commercial stations views were divided. One third of respondents said that senior managers in commercial radio stations did not have the authority to request broadcasts during an emergency and 45% said they did not have the authority to request actions in the public interest.

Each radio station has an emergency contact officer. It might be expected that such a position might be a conduit through which to influence broadcasts and actions. Within the ABC there was significant, if ambivalent, recognition of the role in both requesting broadcasts (50%) and requesting action (75%). Within commercial stations, however, 54% of respondents said they could not request either broadcasts or actions.

Clearly, the emergency contact officer role is not currently a reliable aid to communication with broadcasters.

While ABC stations generally saw a role for the Department of Human Services in providing important information and direction in an emergency (75% positive response for requesting broadcasts and 50% for requesting action) commercial stations significantly underplayed this role. Only 1 respondent out of 11 (9%) in commercial radio listed the Department of Human Services, local or central staff, as having the power to require broadcasts in the public interest and two from eleven (18%) said they had a role in requiring broadcasters to act in the public interest.

The distinction between ABC and commercial radio may be a result of the agreement emergency services have entered into with the ABC, which is identified as the 'broadcaster of choice' in emergency situations. **Given that commercial radio, especially commercial FM, may be a medium of choice for certain demographic groups, particularly young people, it may be worthwhile DHS clarifying its role in emergency risk communication with commercial radio and establishing communication channels with them.**

A full report of the radio station survey can be found in Appendix 3.

Market testing information sheets

DHS have developed a series of 10 leaflets, for public distribution, pertaining to the background and suggested actions to be taken during specific emergencies. The leaflets were market-tested in focus groups to ascertain public perceptions of content and public readiness to take action on the information provided.

Two test groups were run by the Risk Communication Project Group for the Department of Human Services. One group was run at La Trobe University, Bundoora campus with third year Bachelor of Health Sciences students. The second group was run in a private home with full-time workers. There were 42 participants in total, with 36 university students and six full time workers. Of the university students 23 nominated that they were full time students and the remaining 13 were full time students with part time work. Overall there were nine male participants and 33 female participants. Within the university student group 34 were in the 20 - 29 year old age bracket while two were under 20 years of age. In the full time worker group four were in the 40 - 49 year old age bracket, one was in the 50 - 59 year old age bracket and one was 60 or over.

The common themes emerging from these groups were that while the information in the current information sheets is worthy, it could be presented in a more user friendly fashion. Two different kinds of information sheets are required.

Many of the information sheets are about situations that generate a high level of dread and anxiety. In these situations the minds of the people in the risk situation are focused on what to do to protect themselves. A simple one-page information sheet should be prepared for each of the risks. It should contain: a) information on what to do to protect oneself and the people (pets or livestock) for whom one is responsible; and b) how to contact a person(s) who is able to assist with information or assistance with action.

There is also a section of the community who may not be directly affected by the risk situation but who need to understand it. For these people a separate information sheet that contains technical information, long term preventive actions, advice on actions to be taken in the event of the risk situation developing, and contacts for additional information.

Conclusions

1. The community is diverse in terms of experience of risk situations and experience of the different services that have a role in managing emergency situations. Some key differences are found between the following groups in terms of experience and preferred channels of communication.
 - NESB and non-NESB
 - Males and females
 - People under 20 years, 20 – 59 years and 60 years and over
 - People with responsibilities, particularly for children, pets and in country areas, livestock, and those who have no such responsibilities.
 - Parents with pre-school children and older people caring for grandchildren appear to have different experiences and use different channels of communication from other members of the community.
 - There were significant differences between the municipalities in responses to the scenarios. In part this is likely to be due to different environments and in part to different experiences of the social institutions, for example local government.

2. Participants identified a number of criteria by which they established the credibility of informants during an emergency. Informants need to be credible if people are to act on their advice.
 - An informant who is on the spot and witnessing the incident is very credible. These may be journalists or members of the public calling radio stations, from the incident site, on their mobile phone.
 - 'Men in uniform' (who may be male or female). Individuals who belong to respected organization such as CFA, SES and Victoria Police are considered to have expertise and to make the welfare of the community a priority. They have very high credibility.
 - Government experts such as the Chief Health Officer and Occupational Health and Safety Officers also tend to be trustworthy sources. They are also considered to have community well being at heart.
 - Non-commercial media are considered more credible and trustworthy than commercial media. Non-commercial media have the interests of the community in the foreground whilst commercial media are considered to be more concerned with sensationalism.
 - Friends and neighbours are likely to understand the particular features of an individual's circumstances in an emergency and the decisions that individual must make. For many people friends and neighbours are an important source of information and advice.

3. Newspapers are an important communication channel.
 - Understanding which papers are most likely to report particular issues is helpful in placing news releases and public information, though this should be taken in conjunction with information from the focus groups on which sources the public expects to use for emergency information.
 - Clear concise news briefings from governments do appear to be used by reporters so care preparing these is probably time well spent.
 - There are few specialized news reporters which suggests that research is needed in order to identify the appropriate person with whom to place news releases and information.

- Journalists are more likely to seek opinions than information, so if DHS doesn't provide correct information nobody else will, and it needs to be brief in order to ensure that the correct version, not the journalist's summary, will be printed.
- Few stories linger for more than a day or so, and since there is a tendency not to provide follow up, it is important for public risk apprehension and also for closure on issues to provide follow up information, preferably within a week of an event or problem. Media other than newspapers may be appropriate for this.

4. Radio is a key communication channel during emergencies. ABC radio has effective arrangements in place for emergency communication but this is not the case with commercial radio.

- The DHS should undertake an information campaign with radio broadcasters. This campaign could, in the short-term be based on information supplied to regional and metropolitan commercial radio that would a) outline the role of DHS in particular emergency situations and b) clarify DHS place in an overall communication strategy for emergency risk information dissemination. A starting point should be a close consideration of the relevant commercial radio code of practice. The campaign should address the importance of the emergency contact officer.
- DHS should work with other emergency services to provide training about the role and function of emergency contact officers in radio stations, especially in regional areas.
- DHS regional staff should develop local partnerships with other agencies that are held in some esteem by broadcasters generally (e.g. police), as a way to build trust and a profile in emergency risk communication.
- Research be conducted to explore shifts in media use amongst sub audiences (for example, ethnic communities, especially in regional centers, and young people particularly those living independently).

5. DHS has prepared information on potential emergencies. Participants in the focus groups suggested that the information into two separate information sheets.

- The first should contain only simple and practical what to do messages and should be directed to people who are at risk.
- The second should contain a simple version of the technical information and be directed at people seeking information, but not at personal risk.

5. Operationalising risk communication lessons

The Centers for Disease Control argue that effective risk communication ensures that messages are:

- constructively formulated, transmitted and received; and,
- result in meaningful actions.

Furthermore, it should be based on knowledge of relevant publics, their concerns, perceptions of risk and the sources of information they trust.

Sly (2000) proposes a risk communication checklist based on a risk perception model that places recipients of messages at the core of the communication process. Key lessons learnt from this study can be placed within Sly's model. The model consists of six questions.

1. *Whom should we tell?*

Before an emergency

It is desirable for continuing communication links to be established with communities that may be enhanced during an emergency. The practices of the CFA in this regard are highly regarded in the communities in which they operate.

- The general public needs a general understanding of information sources such as help-lines and how to use them.
- There should be a cycle of public health communication relevant to local conditions and targeted audiences e.g. flu vaccinations at the beginning of winter, asthma education at the end of winter.
- Establish reliable communication channels with print and broadcast media that will be important in an event
- Advocate for the inclusion of public health emergency communication strategies in Municipal Public Health Plans

During an emergency

- People likely to be affected by the emergency
- People who may assist with the emergency
- People who may be hard to reach in an emergency such as young women and elderly people, at home and possibly without transport, NESB people. Special attention should be paid to these groups.

2. *What should we tell them?*

Before an emergency

- The risks created by particular events such as bushfire
- Actions that might prevent harm if the event occurs

During an emergency

- What precisely is happening
- What are the risks and to whom
- What people should do to protect themselves

3. *What if the information is incomplete?*

- Acknowledge that the information is incomplete
- Identify reliable sources that people may check for new information

4. *When should we tell them?*

- In the focus groups it was apparent that people with prior experience, or prior knowledge, of a risk situation were better able to understand and plan action than those who did not. Risk communication should be seen as a continuous process with peaks at times of an emergency.
- Timely and accurate information is essential if people are to take protective action. The proximity and/or intensity of the risk should be frequently updated.

5. *How should we tell them?*

- People's preferred sources of information vary with gender, age, NESB or non-NESB status, and to some extent locality.
- The most frequently used communication channels for non-NESB people were ABC local radio, ABC TV, and local newspapers.
- Young people under 20 years of age used ABC TV, Herald-Sun newspaper, Channel 10 TV, local newspapers and Commercial FM radio.
- Family, friends and neighbours are also an important source of information. This communication channel is best accessed through 'community engagement strategies' that seek to generate community links, for example community fireguard telephone trees.
- During an emergency 'people on the spot' are a credible source of reliable information. These people may be eye witnesses or workers who are physically present

6. *Who should deliver the information?*

Prior to an emergency

- DHS is a credible expert source of public health information. In preparation for emergencies DHS should establish a public health profile in non-crisis situations. It should:
 - Identify named experts in DHS with a trustworthy persona
 - Establish relationships with key people in the media at state and regional levels to establish DHS as a trustworthy source of accurate information on health matters, and to enhance understanding of Displan
 - Place DHS branded advertorials in the press with clear, concise and practical information on preparation for high probability emergencies
 - Encourage designated individuals in regional offices of DHS to establish relationships with regional media
 - Work with radio broadcasters to raise the profile of emergency contact people to establish an effective communication pathway

During an emergency

- An informant who is on the spot and witnessing the incident. These may be journalists, members of the public calling radio stations on their mobile phone, or health professionals.
- 'Men in uniform'. Individuals who belong to respected organizations such as CFA, SES and Victoria Police are considered to have expertise and to make the welfare of the community a priority. They have very high credibility.

- Government experts such as the Chief Health Officer, Occupational Health and Safety Officers, and in some localities council officers, tend to be trustworthy sources. They are also considered to have community well being at heart.
- Non-commercial media are considered more credible and trustworthy than commercial media. Non-commercial media have the interests of the community in the foreground whilst commercial media are considered to be more concerned with sensationalism.
- Friends and neighbours are likely to understand the particular features of an individual's circumstances in an emergency and the decisions that individual must make. For many people, friends and neighbours are an important source of information and advice. For certain sorts of emergencies, such as bushfires and floods, community education targeted at the population at risk is likely to be productive.
- NESB community organizations are considered credible and reliable sources of information for members of NESB communities. Furthermore, they may be one of the few good sources of accurate information for these communities.

7. Emergency Management Training Framework

Component	Content	Detail ...
1	Context	Emergency planning Role of health agencies in emergencies
2	Perspectives on risk	Objective risk Risk perception Acting to manage risk Trust Community segmentation
3	Approaches to risk communication	Trusted sources of risk information Official risk communication Publics' use of unofficial sources of risk information Media of communication
Communicating risk		
4	Perspectives on communication and the media	Community segments and media use How different media communicate risk information Managing the media
5	Operationalising risk communication lessons	Sly's checklist
The Case Studies		
6	The Longford Gas Plant Accident	What happened What was learned
7	2002-03 Victorian Bushfires	What happened What was learned
Reality		
8	Newspaper Reporting	Differences between papers in risk reporting What risks are reported

		<p>How papers frame stories</p> <p>Implications of media conventions for risk communicators</p> <p>Time orientation in papers</p>
9	Radio and Emergency Risk Communication	<p>Importance of radio as a medium</p> <p>MOU between ABC and Victorian Emergency Services Organisations</p> <p>Implications of the MOU for public health communicators</p> <p>Commercial radio Code of Practice</p> <p>Implications of the Code of Practice for public health communicators</p>
10	Rationale, scenarios and individual responses	<p>Segmentation of the community</p> <p>Patterns of responses</p> <p>Implications for key public health stakeholders</p>
Resources		
	<p>Report</p> <p>DHS/Commonwealth/WHO etc specific guidelines</p> <p>References: Articles</p> <p>References: Books</p>	

7. References

Sly, T. (2000) 'Communicating about risks: A checklist for health agencies'. Environmental Health.
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