



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health and Ageing**



*National Health Reform*

# Emergency Management





# Your Responsibilities as an Approved Provider of Residential Aged Care Services

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# Outline



- Approved Providers and the *Aged Care Act 1997*
- Role of Approved Providers
- Comprehensive Approach – P P R R
- DoHA Vic Office role
- Additional DoHA support
- Other stakeholders
- Victorian Experience
- Learnings

# Approved Providers and the *Aged Care Act 1997*



- Continue to be responsible for ensuring the care needs of care recipients are met wherever they have been relocated
- Continue to be responsible for the provision of safe and appropriate accommodation
- Subsidies will continue to be paid – relocation arrangements to be negotiated between the providers involved
- Police check arrangements continue to apply – volunteers must be supervised to the extent that is reasonable given the circumstances

Additional information on the Department's website, including the *Risk Management for Emergency Events Fact Sheet*

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

# Approved Provider Role



- Accreditation Standard 4.6 (Fire, Security and other Emergencies) requires residential aged care services to have emergency management plans and protocols to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of care recipients
- Accreditation Standard 4.2 (Regulatory, Compliance) includes compliance with state or local government emergency planning requirements

# Approved Provider Role



Preparation/planning activities include, but are not limited to:

- Liaise with local emergency authorities for planning advice and provide details of facility size and location, and particular needs of the residents
- Provide contact details – department and emergency services
- Ensure key personnel have contact details for local emergency services
- Liaise with local hospital/s to ensure integration of emergency management plans
- Explore alternative accommodation options – develop a network
- Determine appropriate staffing levels for high-risk periods
- Consider the needs of vulnerable care recipients being evacuated, including transport
- Ensure essential supplies and equipment are on hand in the event your service becomes isolated

# Approved Provider Role



During the response to an emergency event aged care approved providers are expected to:

- Continue to deliver appropriate care, which may require additional staff or volunteers
- Liaise with local emergency services - determine seriousness of situation and level of risk to facility and care recipients
- Monitor emergency broadcasts and the media for localised warnings and advice
- Keep care recipients, family and staff informed during any emergency situation
- Liaise with local agencies providing relevant service and recovery support

# Comprehensive Approach to Emergency Management



**P**revention

**P**reparedness

- Accreditation Standards
- Emergency management plans

**R**esponse

**R**ecovery





# DoHA VIC Office role



- Supplying relevant information to aged care providers regarding their responsibilities under the *Aged Care Act 1997* (the Act)
- Assist in the response and/or recovery phase of an emergency
  - Provide early warning advice of “Severe Weather”
  - Provide advice on available alternate accommodation
  - Accept and pass on offers of places
  - Direct queries on fees and payments
  - Make “Exceptional Circumstance” decision re accreditation

# Relocation and evacuation



- The Department can support facilities to relocate or evacuate
  - Pre-emptive relocation vs evacuation
  - The decision should be made in context of facility's emergency plan and emergency service advice
  - Of paramount concern is the safety of residents

# Relocation and evacuation



- Approved providers, to comply with their responsibilities need to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of residents and have continued to provide appropriate care in the specific circumstances
- Approved providers must inform the Department:
  - When residents were evacuated
  - Where each resident was evacuated to
  - Any incidents during evacuation
  - Contact person for Department

# Additional DoHA Support



- Assist state and Commonwealth government response by:
  - gathering & sharing information
  - identifying at-risk aged care facilities
  - monitoring care provided during emergencies
  - providing advice to national coordination agencies through the Department's the National Incident Room

# National Incident Room



# Other Stakeholders



- Stakeholders to consider included:
  - Victorian Health Emergency Coordination
  - Local Health District staff
  - Medicare Australia
  - Department of Human Services
  - Department of Veterans Affairs
  - Peak Bodies

# Victorian Experience



Since 2009 the Victorian Office of DoHA has been involved in five events that combined resulted in 33 full or partial facility evacuations:

- 2009 – February Bushfires - 12 facilities evacuated
- 2011 – January Floods – 9 facilities evacuated
- 2011 – February Floods – 8 facilities evacuated
- 2012 – March Floods – 3 facilities evacuated
- 2012 – June facility fire – 1 facility partially evacuated

# Floods – March 2012



DoHA VSO involvement:

- 2 March – email to APs and Facilities in North East, North Country and East Gippsland weather districts advising of severe weather
- 2 March – RACS vacancy report generated in preparation for weekend
- 3 March – regular communication between State Health (VHEC) and Hume Regional Office commenced
- 4 March – evacuation of Karinya Aged Care Facility (Numurkah) – Public Sector facility no assistance required by DoHA



# Floods – March 2012



- 5 March – initial welfare checks made to 4 Residential Aged Care Facilities (3 in Nathalia and 1 in Numurkah)
- 5 March – DoHA sourced alternative accommodation for the two non-public sector services in case this was needed
- 7 March – Maloga Home (Nathalia) evacuated
- 9 March – Barwo Homestead (Nathalia) evacuated
- DoHA maintained frequent contact with evacuated services
- 13 March – residents returned to Barwo
- 14 March – residents returned to Maloga
- 2 April – residents returned to Karinya

# What we learnt



- Stick to your plan
- Let the Emergency Services do their job - response phase!
- Establish key contacts and communication protocols early
- Be accessible and flexible, use mobile phones contacts
- Resource until the event concludes
- Be prepared for the scope of the impact on people – residents, families, staff, and the local and broader community
- Be prepared to arrange post-event counselling and support
- Be proactive in working with other agencies, they don't all know about aged care

# Contact



[emergencyvic@health.gov.au](mailto:emergencyvic@health.gov.au)

1800 078 079

Department of Health and Ageing website:  
[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)