

Councils and Emergencies Project

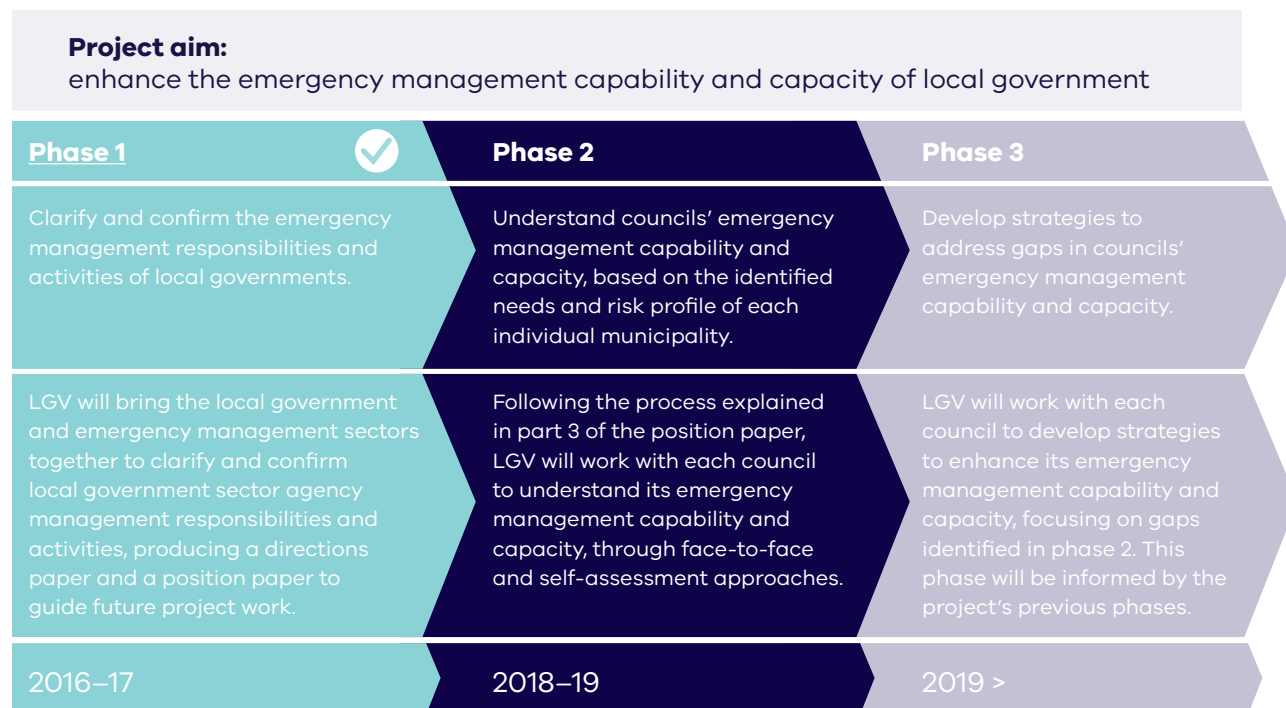
Phase 2

Enhancing the emergency management capability and capacity of local government

► What is the Councils and Emergencies Project?

The project is led by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning through Local Government Victoria (LGV) and was developed to address a need identified by the sector and prioritised in the *Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan*. The priority seeks to 'enhance the capability and capacity of Local Governments to meet their obligations in the management of emergencies'.

The project's three-phase approach emphasises consulting and partnering with councils and the emergency management sector to implement this important State Government priority.



Councils and Emergencies Project

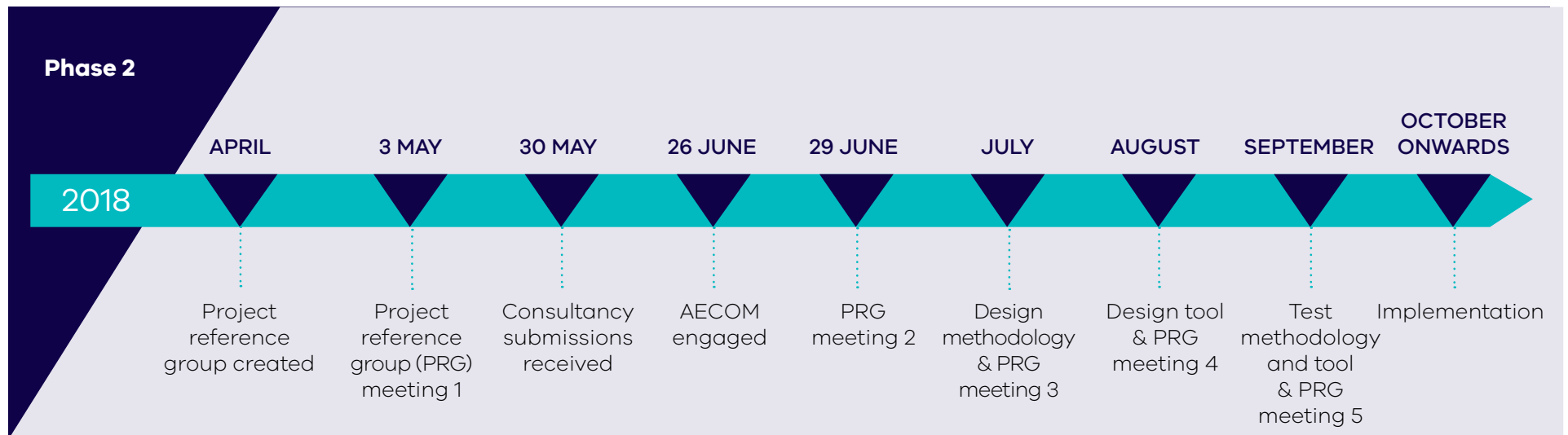
This is the first time this work has been undertaken at a State level across all of Victoria's 79 councils.

This project offers local government the opportunity to understand its emergency management capability and capacity at a sector-wide level and better understand how councils contribute before, during and after emergencies.



► Where is the project up to?

The project has now entered phase two which involves the creation and implementation of a capability and capacity identification tool with councils.





► Phase 2 explained

Building the foundations

Local Government Victoria (LGV) has established a project reference group comprising of local government and emergency management experts. They will assist the project by:

- guiding and informing the development of the assessment approach;
- supporting stakeholder engagement processes, including communications with key stakeholders;
- Providing guidance on project plan timeframes and processes; and
- contributing to the development of strategies to enhance capability.

To produce the best possible outcome for phase 2, LGV chose to engage a consultant with experience in capability and capacity assessment. To assist prospective consultants to understand the brief, the project reference group developed the following principles for the model:

1. Considers the emergency management elements of capability: people, resources, governance, systems and processes
2. Uses the responsibilities and activities outlined in the Councils and Emergencies Position Paper as the baseline for the assessment.
3. Focusses on organisational capability and capacity and not individuals
4. Acknowledges the size and complexity of individual councils
5. Acknowledges the risk profile, local arrangements and the identified needs of each individual municipality
6. Uses a combination of self-assessment and face-to-face assessment approaches.
7. Aligns and provides outputs to inform broader work in the emergency management sector

Engaging a consultant

LGV have engaged AECOM to develop the capability and capacity tool. The *Councils and Emergencies Position Paper* (December 2017) from Phase 1 and the *Victorian Emergency Management Capability Blueprint 2015-2025* will be utilised to develop the tool. To address the differences in each council, LGV intends to use a maturity model to facilitate council self-assessment at an appropriate level.



► What are the next steps for Phase 2 of the project?

Phase 2 is still in its early stages and the exact methodology is still being finalised with AECOM in consultation with LGV and the reference group.

AECOM will complete the tool in four stages:

1. Design of the maturity model and capability and capacity tool
2. Development of the capability and capacity tool prototype and guidance materials
3. Pilot testing with selected councils
4. Final product release

The tool is intended to be completed in October 2018, with implementation to commence following this date. LGV will continue to engage key stakeholders in both the development and implementation of the emergency management capability and capacity identification tool.

Work on the project to date has provided clarity around councils emergency management responsibilities and activities and highlights the critical role councils play to the emergency management sector and the community.

Councils emphasised that they recognise the responsibilities and activities in the *Councils and Emergencies Position Paper* represent the full range of emergency management responsibilities and activities. However no council will undertake them all, and councils will carry them out in different ways that best supports their local communities.

► Looking to the future - Phase 3

After reviewing the data and results that determine individual councils' levels of emergency management capability and capacity, LGV will work with local government to develop strategies to enhance capability and capacity, where gaps were identified during phase 2. Phase 3 is scheduled to commence in 2019.

► What else is changing for local government in emergency management?

The emergency management sector is in an exciting period of reform, and many initiatives are occurring concurrently.

Each initiative has consequences for the local government sector, and the sector's participation is therefore very important. While it is a challenge for smaller or less-resourced councils to provide feedback for all the reform projects, the participation of councils and the emergency management sector in this project has been considerable.

Reform initiatives to be aware of include:

- [Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018](#)
- [Victorian Preparedness Framework](#)
- [Resilient Recovery Strategy](#)
- [Reform of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements](#)