

Victoria's emergency management framework and our residential aged care sector



Carmel Flynn

Director, Health and Human Services Emergency Management

The 'old' emergency paradigm:

- natural enemies (fires, floods)
- single events
- easily-defined consequences
- known response tactics/plans

Victoria's *Emergency Management Act 1986* refers to:

an earthquake, flood, wind-storm or other natural event

a fire, an explosion

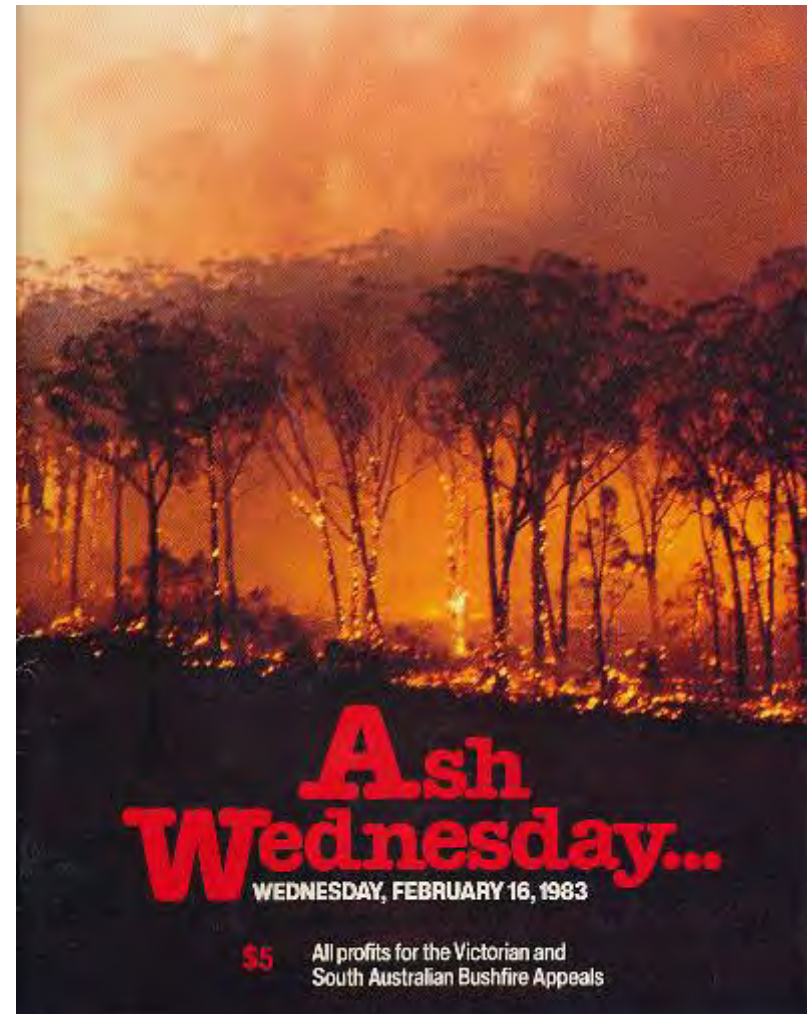
a road accident or any other accident

a plague or an epidemic

a warlike act,

a hi-jack, siege or riot

a disruption to an essential service.



What is an emergency?

Emergencies ...

- disrupt individuals and communities
- are not part of day-to-day experience and are outside normal life expectations
- are unpredictable in occurrence and effects
- require a response for which normal local resources may be inadequate

(continued ...)



What is an emergency?

Emergencies ...

- have wide effects and impacts on the human, built and natural environments
- are complex to deal with
- can occur suddenly
- destroy human, animal and/or plant life, health, property and/or the environment
- overwhelm normal prudent protective measures.



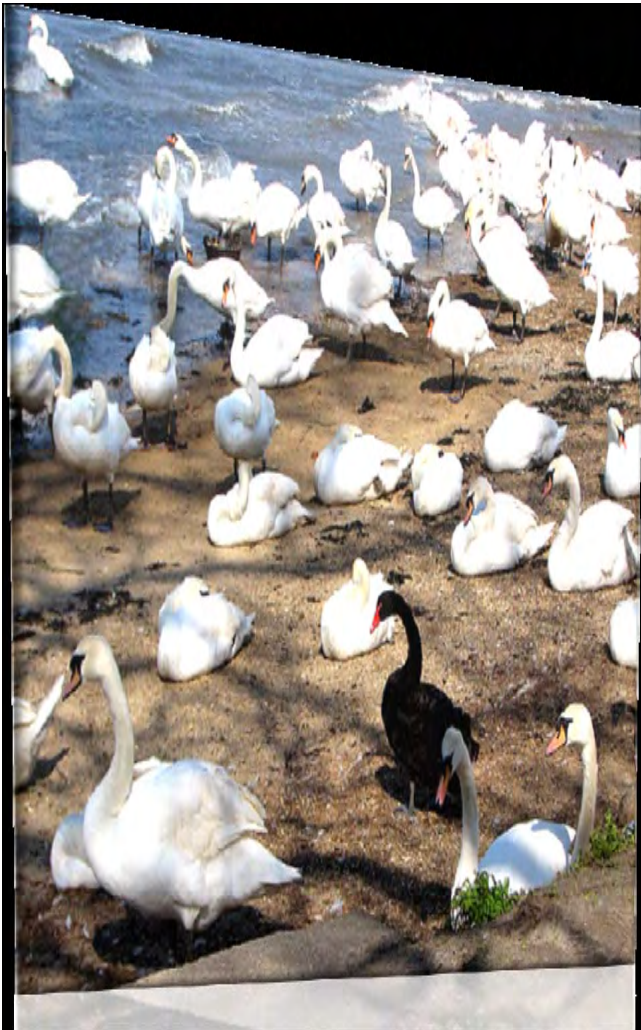
The 'old' emergency paradigm:

- natural enemies (fires, floods)
- single events
- easily-defined consequences
- known response tactics/plans

The 'new' emergency paradigm:

- natural *and* human enemies
- complex/multiple events
- ill-defined consequences
- unknown responses





A black swan:

a hard to predict and rare event
with a large impact.

from Nicholas Nassim Taleb



9/11 Terrorist Attack – New York



Christchurch Earthquake



Earthquake, Tsunami – Japan



Hurricane Katrina – New Orleans



1998 – 2010 Victorian Drought



2009 Black Saturday Bushfires



2010 Victorian Floods



2010 Locust Plague

Recent emergencies ...

- Christmas Day 2011 hailstorms
- Wangaratta gas leak, March 2012
- Portland chemical spill, April 2012
- Victorian floods, Feb–March 2012
- East Keilor siege/evacuation
- Storms/floods, June 2012
- Latrobe Valley power outages
- Moe earthquakes ...





Future emergency scenario:

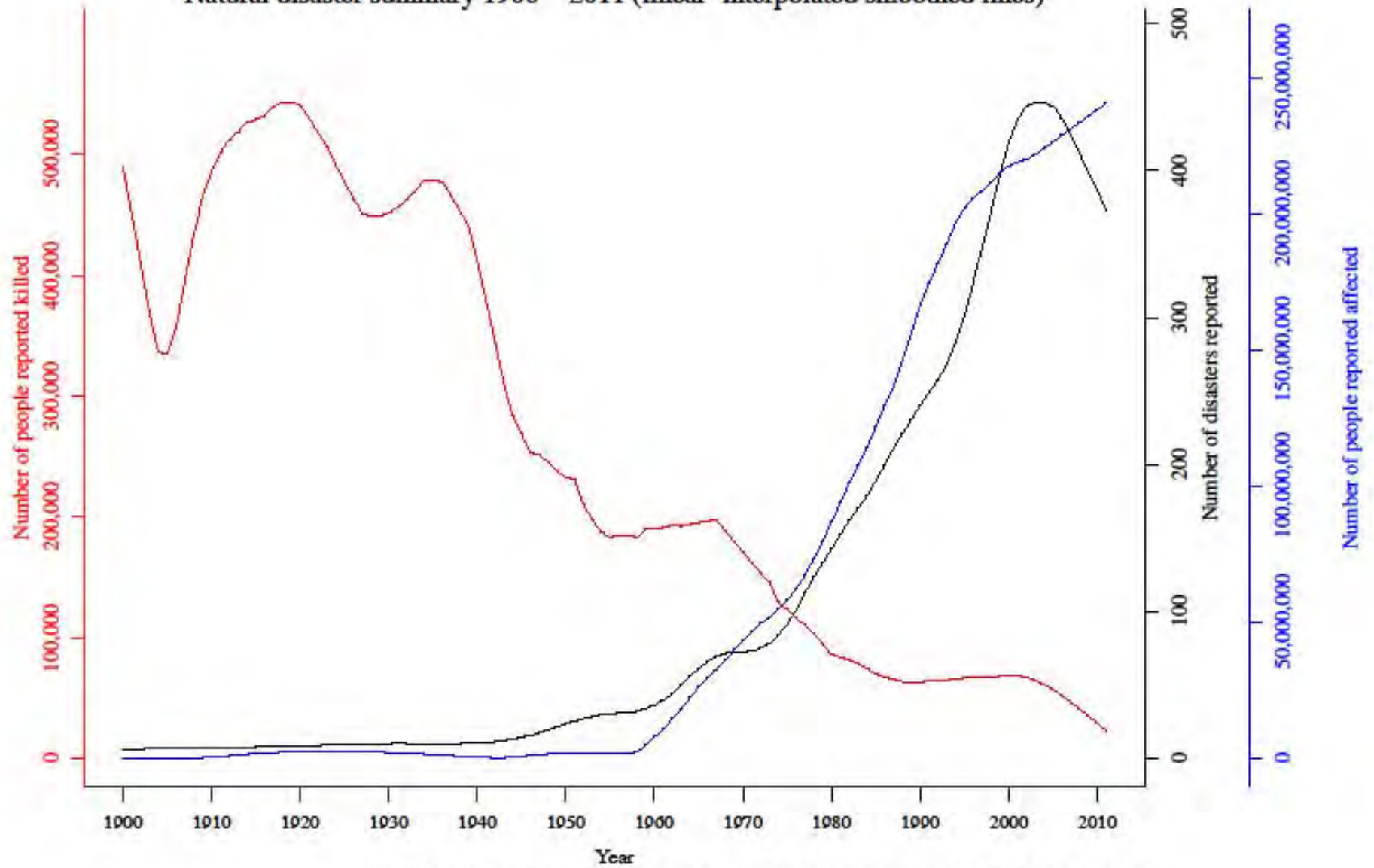
- heatwave
- bushfires
- power outages
- floods



“The frequency of strategic shocks seems to be increasing, and the amplitude of their impact appears to be growing.”



Natural disaster summary 1900 – 2011 (linear-interpolated smoothed lines)



Victorian Government

***Emergency Management Act
1986***

***Emergency Management
Manual Victoria (EMMV)***

***State Mitigation
Arrangements (Part 2)***

***State Emergency
Response Plan (Part 3)***

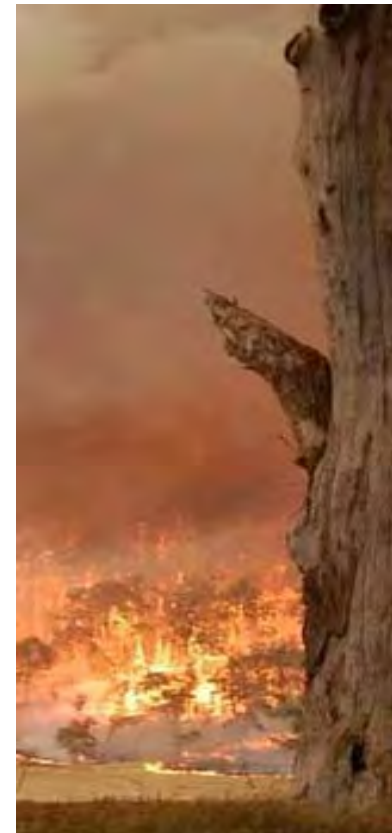
***State Emergency Relief
and Recovery Plan
(Part 4)***

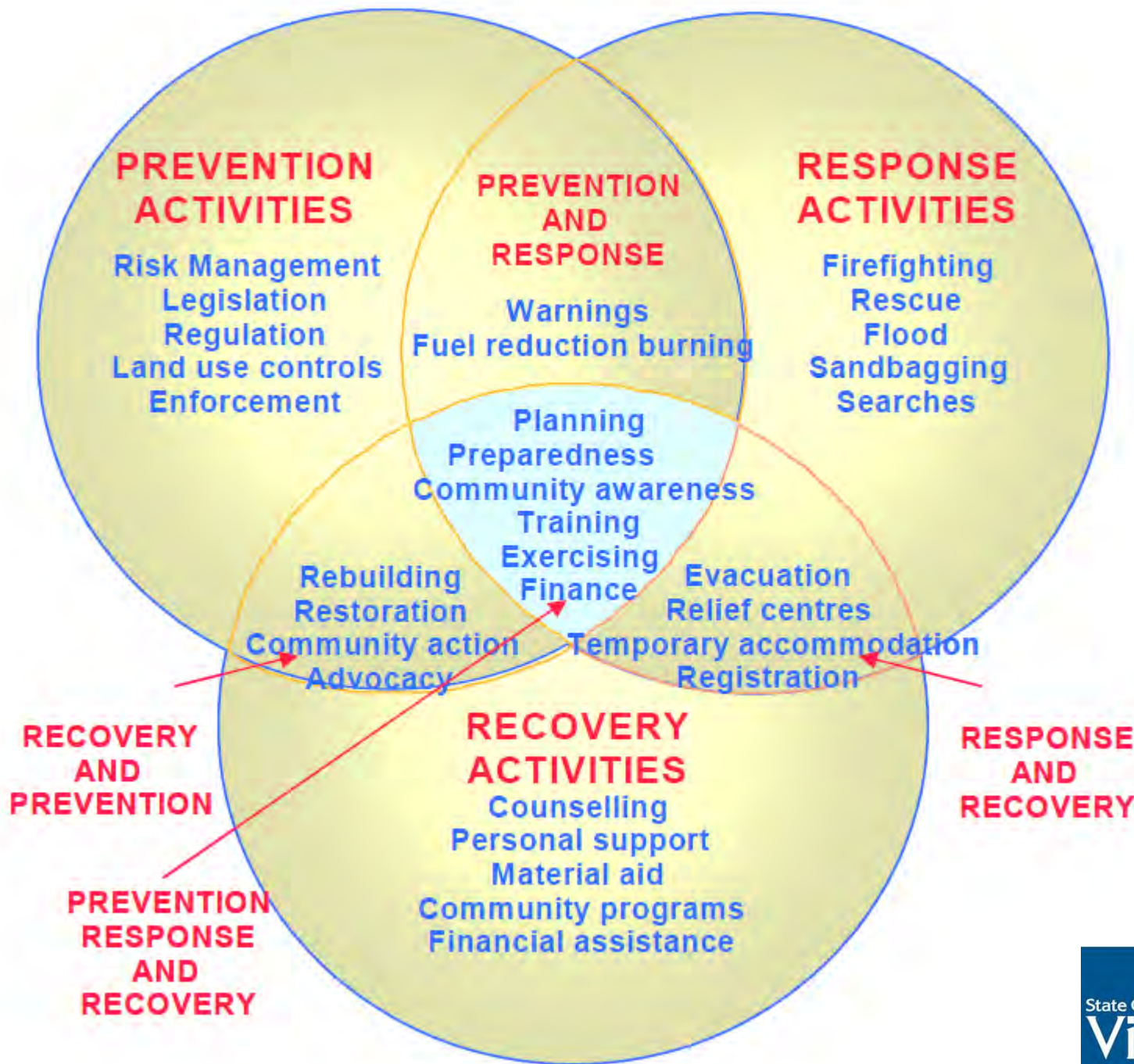
The *Emergency Management Act 1986* notes:

Prevention (and **Planning**): the elimination or reduction of the incidence or severity of emergencies and the **mitigation** of their effects.

Response: the combating of emergencies and the provision of rescue and immediate relief services.

Recovery: the assisting of people and communities affected by emergencies to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning.





How should we prepare?

Our 'new' **Emergency Management** paradigm requires us to:

- develop better preparedness strategies
- expand our local networks
- improve inter-connectedness with emergency services



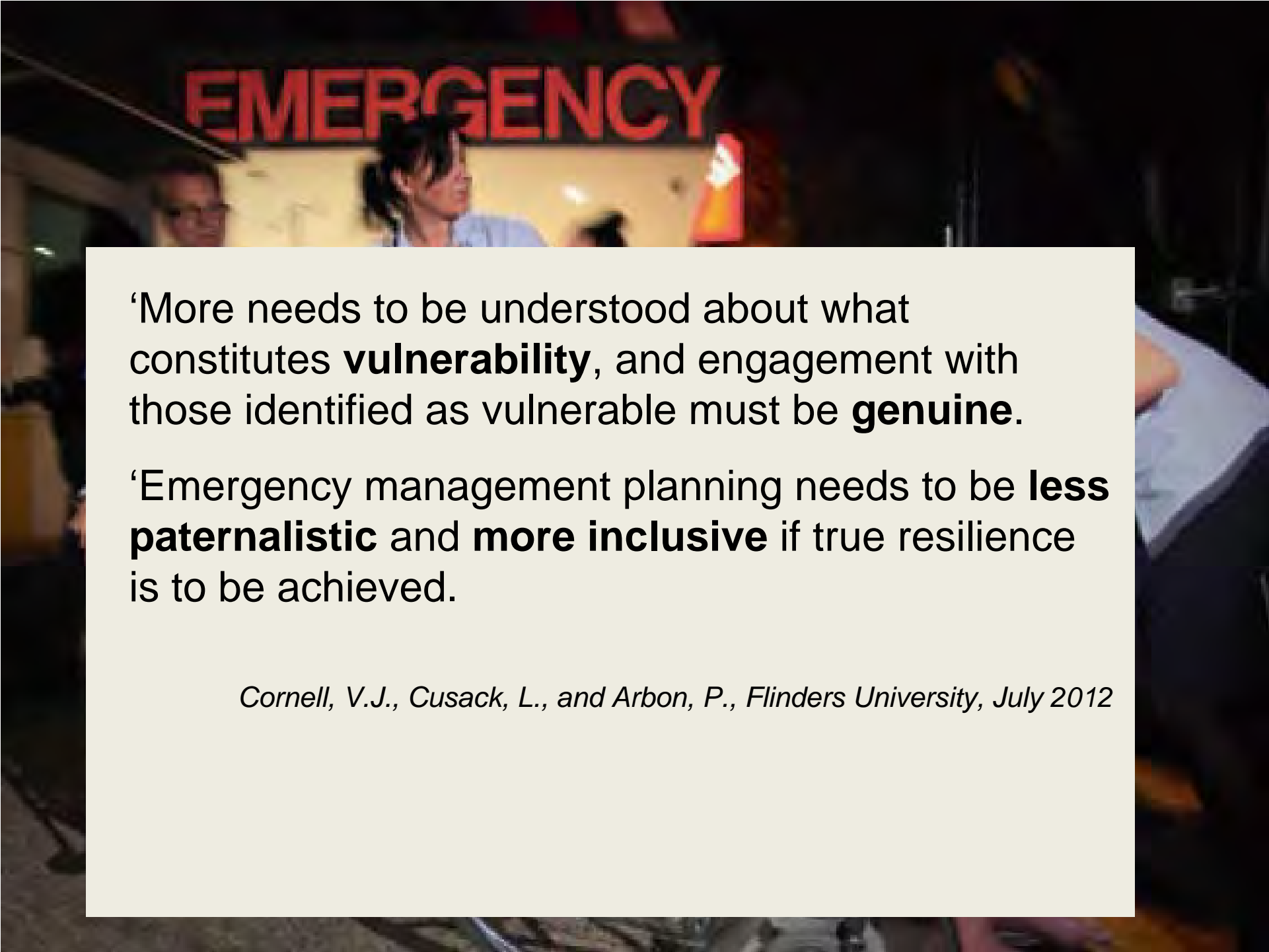
‘What we have learnt’ – an overview:

- **communication** was a key issue, due to power outage and overloaded phones
- facilities must be **self-sufficient**, and plan for at least **a week**
- **information back-up essential** (store hardcopy and electronic data separately)
- the infrastructure and resources of **larger organisations** was very supportive
- **good relationships** with suppliers was very beneficial (for deliveries of fresh produce, medical supplies, services, etc.)



- Recent emergencies (e.g. 2009 Victorian Bushfires and 2010-11 Victorian Floods)
- *2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission*
- *2010-11 Victorian Flood Review (Comrie)* – with entire Chapter 4 on **warnings** and **evacuations**



A photograph of an emergency room. In the background, a red neon sign reads "EMERGENCY". Several people, including a woman in a light blue uniform, are visible in the scene. The lighting is dim, with the sign providing a primary light source.

‘More needs to be understood about what constitutes **vulnerability**, and engagement with those identified as vulnerable must be **genuine**.

‘Emergency management planning needs to be **less paternalistic** and **more inclusive** if true resilience is to be achieved.

Cornell, V.J., Cusack, L., and Arbon, P., Flinders University, July 2012

‘Older people are **resources** for their families and communities, particularly during times of **crisis**.

‘Their years of experience can make them models of **personal resilience** and sources of **inspiration** and **practical knowledge**.

‘They give voluntary aid, care for grandchildren or neighbours, and participate in support or recovery initiatives.

‘Including older persons in planning for and responding in emergencies thus benefits the **whole community**.’

(WHO report, 2008)

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