



When Multicultural Community Leaderships Lead, Systems Follow

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Outline

- Why this matters
- Traditional Approach
- A New Approach
- MEMP Model
- Case study
- Key Findings & Implications
- Conclusion

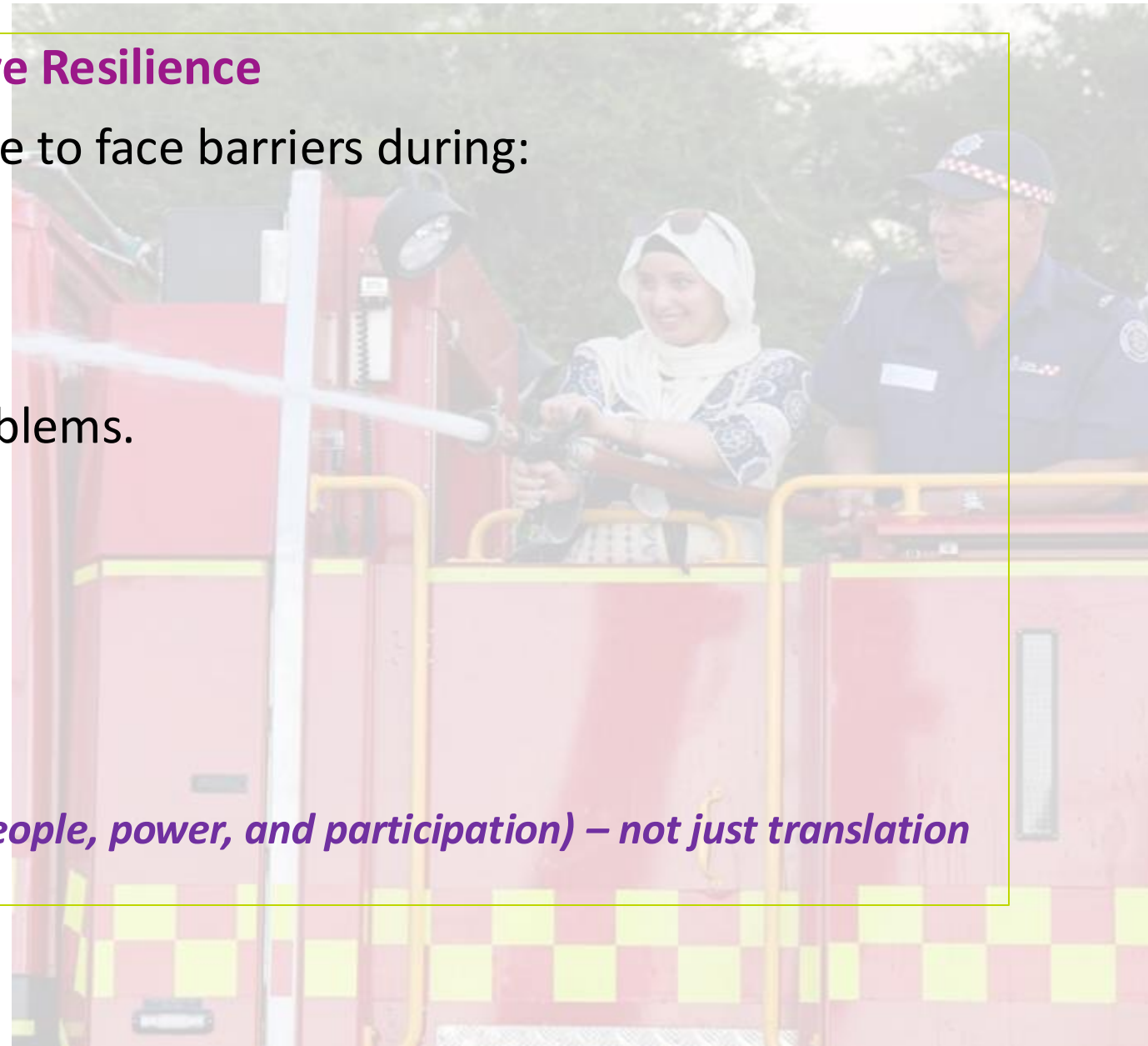




Why this matters - Need for Inclusive Resilience

- Multicultural communities continue to face barriers during:
 - Warnings
 - Preparedness
 - Response
 - Recovery
- These are not simply language problems.
- They also involve:
 - Trust
 - Governance
 - Access
 - Decision-making
 - Relationships

Emergency communication is about 3Ps (people, power, and participation) – not just translation





Traditional Approach (problematic)

Emergency agencies often:

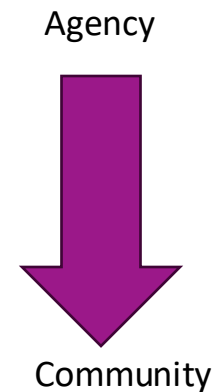
1. Develop plans internally
2. Create messages
3. Translate messages – using machines or translation services
4. Consult communities or share materials for dissemination

Result

- ☐ Communities may receive information

BUT

- ☐ Communities rarely influence decisions





A New Approach

A different Question – What if community leaders were more than messengers?

Instead of being:

- Translators
- Communicators
- Outreach channels

Community leaders could be:

- Co-designers
- Decision contributors
- Risk advisors
- System partners



MEMP Model



The Multicultural Emergency management Partnership (MEMP) – Victoria

MEMP brings together:

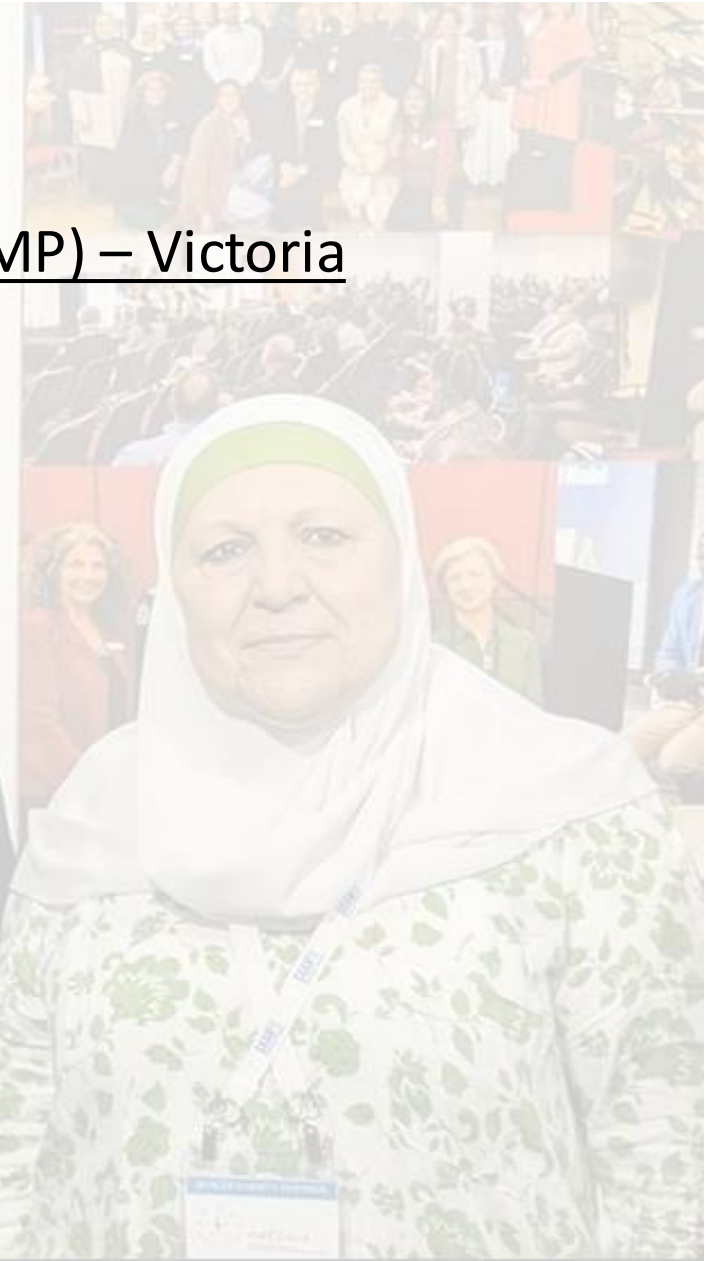
- Community leaders
- Emergency agencies
- Community organisations

Driven by the desire to:

- Identify risks
- Challenge assumptions
- Co-design solutions
- Shape preparedness
- Evaluate outcomes

Move from consultation to co-creation

Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership (MEMP) is a unique community of trusted leaders and members from multicultural communities, emergency services and government organisations. MEMP works together to make communities safer and more resilient during emergencies like floods, fires and severe weather events. We connect and support each other.





From one-way to two-way Communication

Trust develops when:

- Information flows both ways
- Questions flow back
- Concerns reach decision makers
- Solutions are developed together



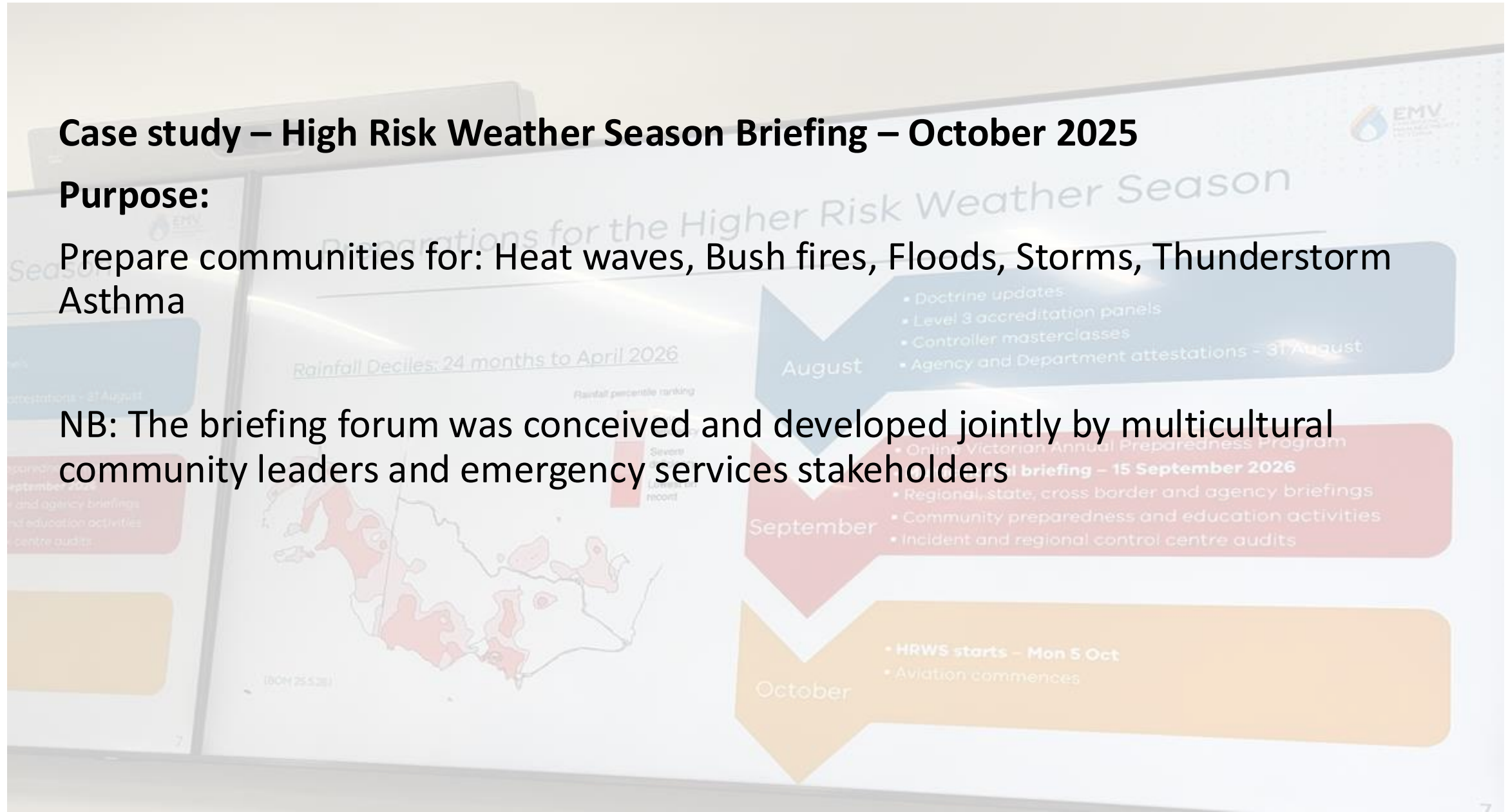


Case study – High Risk Weather Season Briefing – October 2025

Purpose:

Prepare communities for: Heat waves, Bush fires, Floods, Storms, Thunderstorm
Asthma

NB: The briefing forum was conceived and developed jointly by multicultural
community leaders and emergency services stakeholders





Stories of Summer – Follow up – May 2026

- Co-hosted by:
 - Emergency Commissioner Victoria and
 - MEMP
- Purpose
 - Reflect on the past summer season
 - Evaluate impact
 - Understand community experiences
 - Improve further preparedness

A Critical shift: Learning with communities, not about communities





Key findings/Lessons

1. Multicultural leadership improves risk communication

Community leaders identify

- Ambiguous language
- Hidden assumptions
- Practical barriers
- Cultural considerations

Result: Better understanding and stronger preparedness

2. Shared governance creates earlier problem solving

3. Trusted connectors need support –

- Funding
- Training
- Wellbeing support
- Clear roles



...Key Findings/Lessons

4. Multicultural leadership provides valuable system intelligence

E.g.

- Misinformation
- Low trust
- Digital exclusion
- Limited hazard awareness
- Service access barriers

These insights strengthen the entire emergency management system.



Key implications

1. Embed multicultural community leaders early
2. Design two-way communication
3. Resource the trusted connectors
4. Reduce information burden
5. Build accountability into the partnership
6. Empower active community participation





The Big Shift – From Access to Authority

Old/traditional thinking

“How do we get information to multicultural communities?”

New thinking

“How do multicultural communities help share emergency management?”

This is the difference between inclusion and shared leadership!





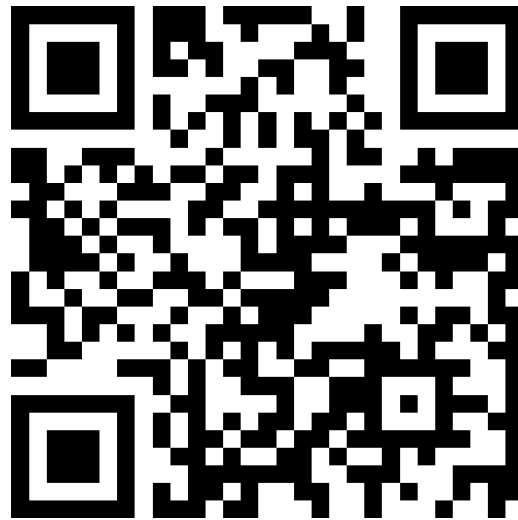
Conclusion

- ✓ **Emergency management becomes stronger when multicultural community leaders are involved:**
 - Before emergencies
 - During emergencies
 - After emergencies
- ✓ **Multicultural leadership should not be an add-on to be retrofitted , rather, it is a critical emergency management infrastructure.**
- ✓ **Inclusive emergency management is achieved not by adding multicultural communication at the end, but by embedding multicultural leadership from the beginning.**





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