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| Guidance to Support the Management of Vulnerable Persons Registers and ‘At-Risk’ Local Facility Lists |
| OFFICIAL |

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# Context

The state’s Vulnerable Persons Registers (VPR) online database is accessible to relevant funded agencies focused on client services and 64 local government areas (councils) in rural, regional, and urban fringe areas (wholly or partly within previous historical CFA districts).

This document supersedes the three former guidelines issued by the department (formerly known as Department of Health and Human Services) to support councils in local planning for those most at risk as per the *2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission* and *2011 Victorian Flood Review recommendations*.

Councils receive funding through the *Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program* (MERP) (administered by Local Government Victoria), established in 2010 as a direct response to the above-mentioned recommendations. The MERP continues to provide funding to support councils to deliver their emergency management responsibilities including the coordination of local Vulnerable Persons Registers (VPRs).

Councils also develop and maintain a local list of ‘at-risk’ facilities, where people most at risk may be located or residing.

These requirements are referenced in the Vulnerable People in Emergencies policy, see: <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management>

# Purpose

This document guides funded agencies and councils in fulfilling their emergency management responsibilities, supporting people most at risk and adopting an all-hazards, all emergencies approach. It emphasises the shared responsibility among funded agencies, councils, and other agencies.

# Guidance to support the management of VPRs

## Overview

VPRs are part of Crisisworks <<https://datalink.atlassian.net/wiki/display/KB/Vulnerable+Persons+Register>> - the standard web-based emergency management system used by councils in Victoria.

VPRs store local information about consenting individuals who meet the VPR criteria[[1]](#footnote-2), directly entered by funded agencies and locally overseen by in-scope councils.

It is critical for all parties to understand that evacuations of individuals listed in a VPR cannot be guaranteed in emergencies. Any assistance depends on the capacity and ability of emergency services to safely provide it.

Information in the VPRs is confidential and is only to be used for emergency management planning (including exercising and training), response and recovery. Business needs and privacy requirements should be carefully considered when allocating roles and access to the VPRs, due to the sensitive nature of information contained within VPRs. Note: a person can request access to the information contained in their VPR record.

Information in the VPR can be filtered, mapped, and exported to reports for authorised purposes, according to the role and access rights of each organisation.

All access to, and activity in VPRs is recorded for potential audit purposes. As such, each user must have an individual logon and must not share these details with other staff.

The VPR database has two standard roles for different organisations – a ‘coordinator’ and a ‘user’. ‘Coordinators’ have an oversight role on behalf of their organisation and can set and manage ‘users’ for the organisation. Business continuity should be considered when allocating roles.

Any information viewed in or taken from the system must be treated sensitively and confidentially, following secure information practices and privacy requirements.

# VPR pre-requisite - emergency management preparedness planning

A VPR is considered as a last resort option, once all other existing processes and mechanisms to support people at-risk in emergencies have been exhausted, to identify people in the local community that need support to be evacuated in emergency situations.

In order for someone living in the community to be listed on a local VPR, all four [VPR Eligibility Criteria](#_VPR_Eligibility_Criteria) must be met, see: [VPR Eligibility Criteria](#_VPR_eligibility_criteria_1) below.

## VPR eligibility criteria

Four (4) mandatory eligibility criteria must all be met for someone living in the community to be listed on a VPR, as follows:

**1. Frail and/or physically or cognitively impaired; and**

**2. Unable to comprehend warnings and directions and/or respond in an emergency situation; and**

**3. Cannot identify personal or community support networks to help them in an emergency; and**

**4. Consents to be on the VPR.**

***Note: A person must meet all 4 of the above-mentioned criteria to be listed (and remain) on a VPR. If a person does not meet these criteria, they should be immediately removed from the local VPR.***

Priority should be given to working with and supporting individuals in their emergency preparedness. Emergency management planning should use strengths-based approaches and may include supporting a person to develop a personal emergency management plan and identifying potential support networks.

Staff are not expected to provide expert emergency advice or to commit to being part of or be responsible for a client’s emergency response or evacuation - where this is outside of current organisational practices.

Strengths-based approaches include identifying and embedding into emergency management planning processes to tailor strategies, support shared responsibility, effective risk management and foster genuine co-design, inclusive participation, and collaborative partnerships.

Within the emergency management context shared responsibility should be person-centric and strengths-based to enable inclusive, community influenced local arrangements. It fosters social connectedness and facilitates identifying and supporting people most at risk in all phases of an emergency.[[2]](#footnote-3)

### Eligibility Considerations

Eligibility considerations may include but not limited to:

| **Eligibility Criteria** | **Considerations** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Frail, and/or physically or cognitively impaired | * Level of frailty or physical impairment that would likely reduce their capacity to act during an emergency. * Likely to require increased time and/or assistance to respond in an emergency. * Inability to make an independent decision due to cognitive or other impairment. |
| 1. Unable to comprehend warnings and directions and/or respond in an emergency situation | * Inability to make an independent decision due to cognitive or other impairment. * Unable to understand or respond to emergency warnings or directions, such as speech/hearing impediment and poor use and/or understanding of English. * Does not drive or have access to a vehicle. |
| 1. Personal or community support networks | * Does the person:   + live alone or live with someone with similar or greater degree of vulnerability?   + have no family, friend, carer or next of kin or social/community networks in the local area able to assist?   + have no near neighbours or no connection with neighbours or the local community?   + have no local networks/service providers? |
| 1. Informed consent | * If the person does not / no longer consents to be on a VPR. |

## Person/s receiving services

If a person is receiving services, funded agencies should consider the following:

* Does the individual have a personal emergency management plan in place?
* Encourage or, where necessary, support them to develop a relevant plan
* Whether the person would potentially meet the VPR criteria.

It is preferable to encourage and promote emergency management planning with personal or community support networks, such as family and friends or neighbours, where available.

Depending on the circumstances funded agencies may also wish to:

* provide direction about how to access planning guidance/materials
* distribute planning guidance/materials to the person to fill out independently or with their personal support networks
* support the person identifying potential personal or community networks or support them to develop their own personal emergency management plan.

***Note: If the person has a VPR record and no longer needs to be on the VPR, follow the*** [***Closing a VPR Record***](#_Closing_a_VPR) ***process.***

## People not receiving services

If a person is not receiving funded agency services and identified by a funded agency (that is discontinuing services) or a VPR Coordinator as potentially meeting the VPR criteria, the Australian Red Cross is able to provide emergency management planning support.

Similar to the process outlined above for funded agencies, the Australian Red Cross will encourage and support personal emergency management planning. This includes initial discussions about whether personal or community support networks can be identified. The Australian Red Cross will advise the exiting funded agency and/or council of their assessment as well as the outcome of this engagement; including if the person now has supports in place or if the person is not able to develop an emergency management plan and why Australian Red Cross services are not suitable. In the case of the latter the council, informed by this advice and assessment, may determine the need to consider the person for possible inclusion in the VPR database.

## Emergency management planning resources

The list below provides some suggested resources to support emergency management planning:

* [Australian Red Cross - Resources](https://www.redcross.org.au/emergencies/resources/)
* [*CFA - People who need help planning to leave*](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/before-and-during-a-fire/leave-early/people-who-need-help-planning-to-leave#:~:text=The%20Red%20Cross%20'Bushfires%3A%20Preparing,else%20in%20your%20support%20network.) (including accessing the *Australian* *Red Cross ‘Bushfires: Preparing to leave early’ Plan*)
* [Emergency Management Planning Resource Library](https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/node/952/emergency-management-planning-resource-library), including to access the new *Victorian Emergency Management Planning Toolkit for People Most at Risk*
* [*Person-Centred Emergency Management Preparedness (P-CEP)*](https://collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep/)
* [*VICSES – How to plan and prepare for emergencies*](https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe)

# VPR database

## Key roles and responsibilities

The following provides an overview of the VPR database key roles and responsibilities:

#### Councils

* Have a VPR Coordinator profile within the VPR database.
* The nominated staff member/s assigns/removes user/s (staff) access and oversee local VPRs.
* The VPR Coordinator’s other responsibilities include:
  + approving/declining funded agency VPR registration requests.
  + overseeing the funded agency completion of the twice-yearly mandatory revalidation process.
  + facilitating the engagement of Australian Red Cross to support emergency management preparedness planning with individuals with VPR records not attached to a funded agency.
  + undertaking follow-up actions (contact attempts) with people that have VPR records no longer attached to a funded agency and their VPR record has not been revalidated.

#### Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

* Provides the VPR database online platform for funded agencies, councils and Victoria Police to use. Authorised staff can access the VPR database for reporting and auditing purposes.
* Supports VPR coordinators with advice and guidance.

#### Funded Agencies

* Have an Agency Coordinator profile within the VPR database.
* The nominated staff member/s manages the agency VPR profile and assigns/removes user/s (staff) access.
* The Agency Coordinator’s other responsibilities include:
  + attaching/detaching VPR records to agency profile.
  + transferring VPR records to a new agency (before detaching agency profile), if required.
  + referring client to the Australian Red Cross, if ceasing services and there is no new agency and person wishes to remain on the VPR, and informing the council’s VPR coordinator.
  + managing/updating VPR records.
  + completing the twice-yearly mandatory revalidation process.
  + actioning requests from the VPR coordinator/s in a timely manner.

#### Victoria Police

* Have a Victoria Police Coordinator profile within the VPR database.
* The nominated staff member/s assigns/removes all Victoria Police users.
* Authorised officers can view all VPRs in Victoria (with a single logon) for emergency management planning and response, including potential evacuation (without having to contact the council or funded agency).

***Note: All VPR database coordinators should regularly review staff access and remove user profiles for staff that are no longer undertaking the role relevant for VPR database purposes.***

#### Australian Red Cross

Whilst **Australian Red Cross** does not access the VPR online database, it may receive referrals from an Agency Coordinator or VPR Coordinator to provide emergency management planning support for a person with a VPR Record who no longer receives services.

The Australian Red Cross will advise of their assessment and outcomes of the engagement; and if the person has supports in place and no longer needs to be included in the VPR or if this is not the case and possible inclusion should be considered.

## Login processes

The table below outlines the process to create and manage staff user profiles.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Who** | **User Profile Process** |
| Council  (VPR Coordinator / Council User Profiles) | Each council must have a nominated VPR Coordinator. The Crisisworks Administrator allocates the VPR Coordinator in the system. One or more VPR Coordinators can be identified.  **Note**: VPR Coordinators and VPR access users will be able to view the details of all people listed within the local VPR for the municipality / Local Government Area. Given the sensitive nature of this information, it is important to carefully consider the allocation of these roles.  **Considering funded agency profile requests**  The VPR Coordinator will be notified via email when an agency profile request has been submitted and can review it via the ‘New agency’ tab in the VPR. The VPR Coordinator will approve or decline the registration request within 5 working days.  Duplicate agency registration requests should be discussed with the agency and declined.  **Creating a funded agency profile**  The VPR Coordinator can also create a funded agency profile to access the functionality to edit/manage VPR records within their LGA with no service provider, see: [Attachment 2 - Follow-up Actions (contact attempts) for unattached or unverified VPR records](#_Attachment_2_–) |
| Funded Agencies  (Agency Coordinator / Agency User profiles) | Funded agencies create and manage their agency profile in the VPR database – via this link [vpr.mecccentral.com](https://vpr.mecccentral.com/)  **Only one registration is required per agency.**  Before creating a profile, check if an existing profile already exists.  If an agency profile needs to be created the Agency Coordinators will provide basic details about their agency, including details for agency coordinator/s, secondary and/or emergency contacts (where available), and nominate the local government.  The VPR Coordinator from the nominated local government will review and approve or decline agency registration requests. Duplicate registration requests will be declined. |

## Funded Agency Profile Types

There are two types of funded agency profiles within the VPR database:

| **Funded Agency Type** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| Primary | * Responsible for obtaining informed consent, and for updating and maintaining information in the VPR records. * Responsible for reassigning a VPR record to a linked secondary agency i.e. nominate them as the new primary agency. * For the process to update a VPR record when the primary agency is no longer providing services see: [Primary Agency no longer providing services](#_Funded_Agency_(Primary)   **Note*:*** Only one funded agency is able to update the VPR record (to prevent duplication). |
| Secondary | * Other funded agency profiles may be linked to a VPR record if someone is receiving services. * An agency should check whether a VPR record already exists within the VPR, before obtaining consent or creating a VPR record. By logging into the VPR database, and entering the name, address and date of birth in the ‘New Client’ section, the VPR database will show potential duplicates. * Where a person already has a VPR record, the VPR database will link this agency to the existing record as a Secondary Agency. A secondary agency will receive notifications if the Primary Agency edits or removes the VPR record. * A secondary agency is also expected to:   + remove their agency from the VPR record if they are longer providing services   + confirm their ongoing status as part of the mandatory revalidation process, held twice a year   + take on the role of the Primary Agency, where the Primary Agency is removed or no longer providing services.   **Note*:*** As informed consent has been obtained, primary and secondary agencies are able to discuss shared clients (where relevant and required). |

## Creating and Maintaining VPR Records

An overview of creating and maintaining VPR records is provided below.

Datalink has full instructions on creating and maintaining VPR Records and VPR database navigation. These can be accessed via the VPR database (using the User Manual contained in the web pages or in pdf form), see: <<https://datalink.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/KB/pages/105234738/Vulnerable+Persons+Register>>

Councils are also able to contact the Datalink helpdesk for any technical assistance – see <[Datalink Help & Support Knowledge Base](https://datalink.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/KB/overview?homepageId=67731470)> .

### VPR record information

To create and maintain a VPR record the following information is captured:

* **Evidence of their informed consent** – attaching the signed consent form or adding the details of the consent (e.g. when it was provided and by whom) within the comments/notes field.
* It is prudent to check the VPRs to confirm if consent has already been provided and entered/attached to the VPR record. A person must provide informed consent before they are included in a VPR.
* Informed consent should also be captured in existing VPR records if this is not evident; and can be undertaken at any time as part of maintaining accurate VPR records.

***Note: A VPR record is non-compliant if informed consent is not captured.***

* A template consent form is provided at [Attachment 3 – Consent Form](#_Attachment_3_–). This form includes various methods to obtain consent, including written, verbal or consent via an authorised representative[[3]](#footnote-4). It can be used when creating or maintaining/revalidating a VPR record.
* **Personal identification information** – person’s name, date of birth, gender and address (based on residence).
* **Contact information** – person’s and emergency contact details (where available). Even if emergency contacts are not local, they may be able to provide additional information during an emergency.
* **Emergency considerations** – ticking the appropriate items relevant to emergency services officers if they were to attempt to assist the person in an emergency (as per the table below). Leave fields blank if they do not apply or it is not known if they apply. There is also a comments (free text) section where additional content can be added, such as:
  + - * Will the person need special consideration before being approached by uniformed police or other emergency services personnel, should an evacuation be recommended?
      * Is there a known strategy to deal with complex behaviour that could assist police in evacuation?
      * Will specialist support be required to evacuate the person safely?
      * Are there specific directions that could assist accessing the property?

| **Emergency Considerations** | **Type** |
| --- | --- |
| Mobility | * Wheelchair * Walking aids * Weight-related mobility aids * Stretcher required * Mobility aids |
| Access and security | * 4WD required * Side access * Rear access * Behaviour * Dangerous animals |
| Equipment, critical medication and pets | * Home ventilator * Oxygen * Dialysis * Parenteral nutrition * Ventricle assistance device * Critical medication * Service animal * Pets[[4]](#footnote-5) |
| Communication or cognitive | * Hearing * Sight * Speech * Dementia * Mental health * Cognitive disability * Alcohol or other drugs * Non-English speaking |

## Funded Agency (Primary Agency) no longer providing services

### If a secondary agency is attached to the VPR record

The primary agency that is no longer providing services must confirm with the person if they still consent to be on the VPR and they still meet all 4 criteria. If consent remains in place, the primary agency removes their agency profile from the VPR record and nominates a secondary agency (if one is linked to the record) as the new primary agency. The Primary Agency should include comprehensive notes within the VPR record.

**Note*:*** If this does not occur, the VPR database will automatically select the first listed Secondary Agency by default, as the new Primary Agency. This agency along with any other Secondary Agencies and the relevant VPR Coordinator, will be notified accordingly.

While the record remains in the VPR database, and consent technically remains valid, a new consent form should be completed by the new Primary Agency if not previously been obtained, preferably within one month.

If the person no longer consents or needs to be on the VPR, follow the steps for [*Closing a VPR record*](#_Closing_a_VPR)

### If there is no secondary agency / new agency attached to a VPR record

If there is no secondary agency or new agency the Primary Agency must confirm with the person if they still consent to be on the VPR and they still meet all 4 criteria.

If the person:

* no longer needs to be on the VPR the Primary Agency should consider documenting this action with the person and then must update the VPR record before following the steps for [*Closing a VPR record*](#_Closing_a_VPR).
* continues to provide informed consent to remain on the VPR (and remains eligible) the Primary Agency needs to refer the person to the Australian Red Cross to provide emergency management preparedness support, and inform the council’s VPR Coordinator. If Australian Red Cross advises that the person:
  + now has supports in place and no longer needs to be on the VPR the Primary Agency needs to update the VPR record and follow the steps for [*Closing a VPR record*](#_Closing_a_VPR)
  + is unable to develop an emergency management plan and Australian Red Cross is referring the matter along with their assessment to the relevant council for consideration, the Primary Agency must engage with the council before removing the agency profile from the VPR record. The council, informed by the Australian Red Cross advice and assessment, may determine the need to consider the person for possible inclusion in the VPR database/maintaining the existing VPR record.

***Note: VPR record status is changed to ‘unverified’ when the Primary Agency removes their agency from the VPR record (i.e., creating an ‘unattached’ VPR record).***

This VPR record is referred to the VPR Coordinator to review, and they may need to contact the person directly. For additional guidance on what constitutes reasonable contact attempts for unattached/unverified VPR records; see [Attachment 2 - Follow-up Actions (contact attempts) for unattached or unverified VPR records](#_Attachment_2_-)

## Updating VPR records

It is important that information held in the VPRs is up to date[[5]](#footnote-6). Records can be updated at any time, especially when there is a change in the person’s situation.

A status is shown against each VPR record:

* **Verified**: Person’s details are up to date.
* **Re-validate**: The person’s details are due for review by the mandatory revalidation date, including if they continue to consent to be included in the VPR.
* **Unverified**: The person’s details require urgent review and action.

A mandatory revalidation process is held at least twice per year, by **31 October and 30 April.** Email reminders will be automatically generated in advance of these dates. One month before these dates, the status of all records will be set to ‘**re-validate**’. During the month, all records need to be re-verified. If re-verification of records does not occur by these mandatory dates, the status of these records changes to ‘**unverified**’ and notification emails will be sent to the VPR Coordinator.

## Closing a VPR record

Being on the VPR is not compulsory – and identified people can choose not to consent and can remove themselves at any time.

A VPR record should be closed when someone no longer needs to be on a VPR (such as a change of situation or upon request removal/no longer consents).

https://vpr.mecccentral.com/d will archive the record, making it no longer visible within the VPR or to emergency services organisations. Before closing a VPR record standard record keeping practices should be applied, including adding detailed notes within the VPR record. Information must be collected and recorded in line with information privacy requirements.

Guidance to Support the Management of Local ‘At-Risk’ Facility Lists

Councils are required to develop and maintain a list of facilities where people most at risk may be located, to support local emergency management planning. Authorised Victoria Police representatives can access these lists for planning, exercising and in emergencies.

Facilities refers to buildings where people most-at-risk are likely to be situated. Examples include:

* aged care facilities, hospitals, schools, disability group homes and childcare centres.
* facilities funded or regulated by the department.
* commonwealth funded residential aged care facilities; and
* other locally identified facilities including sites that frequently used (meeting or gathering places) and/or where people commonly reside e.g. Senior Citizens Centres, retirement villages, rooming houses, community halls and/or caravan parks with long-term residents, etc.

Some facilities are sensitive locations and should not be widely circulated to the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC). While this information is important and must be available for emergencies, it should be limited to those who potentially require it (MEMPC Secretariat, Victoria Police and control agencies). The departments/agencies will advise which facilities this applies to.

Otherwise, lists are typically included in, or available through, Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) and must be accessible to Victoria Police. Local emergency management planning processes should clearly articulate how this information will be accessed in an emergency.

## Emergency management preparedness planning - people in facilities

Funded facilities are expected to have emergency management plans in place to support people residing, staying or situated within facilities. The role of the facility operator does not equal a requirement to undertake individual emergency management planning activities or to access people for VPRs. However people may still require support in developing a personal emergency management plan.

## Information requirements for facility lists

A template list is provided as a reference for developing/managing a facility list ([Attachment 4 Facility List Template](#_Attachment_4_-)). Councils that already have a list should review it to make sure consistent information is being collected.

Key elements are:

* **Facility identification information** – facility name, facility type, residential or non-residential, etc.
* **Address information** – in a format that can be GIS mapped to support planning (with separate columns). Latitude and longitude can be included where known. A local government field is included to assist sorting.
* **Contact information** – two contacts (name/position and contact phone number/s) and an indication of availability (such as business hours, 24 hours). Where possible and relevant, 24-hour contacts should be added.

# Attachment 1 - Frequently Asked Questions

|  |
| --- |
| **Q. Can someone opt-in to be listed on a local VPR?**  A. VPRs are not designed to be ‘opt-in’ registers and are not publicly promoted for self-registration purposes.  To enable a manageable list that is applicable for emergencies, and for evacuation purposes in the event of an emergency in the local area particular, it is important to undertake the processes outlined above.  However, it is possible that someone may contact their local Council, or a funded agencies they are receiving services from, to request their name be added to a local VPR (where they have no other supports available and recognise will need support to evacuate during an emergency), or to have a member of their family or someone they know put onto a register for the same reason.  If council or agency staff receive requests for someone to be listed on a VPR, it is important to manage expectations about potential assistance from emergency services organisations and that assistance is not guaranteed.  Encouraging and undertaking emergency management planning activities with personal and community networks, rather than focussing on being listed on a VPR, should be actively promoted.  If someone calls for themselves, or a family member or friend, this is a good opportunity to provide information about emergency management planning resources and encourage planning activities or prompt the person they are calling about to connect with local community or personal networks.  Anyone requesting to be listed on a VPR, or requesting someone they know to be registered, must – at a minimum - meet all four mandatory eligibility criteria. Refer to [VPR pre-requisite - emergency management preparedness planning](#_VPR_pre-requisite_-_1) for further information. |
| **Q. What do I do if someone listed on the VPR is uncontactable?**  A. You must undertake ‘reasonable follow-up contact attempts’ using the guidance for this process outlined in **Attachment 2**. |
| **Q. When can a funded agency (primary) detach their agency profile from a VPR record?**  A. The processes outlined above must be followed to ensure the VPR record is not left unattached. This may include transferring the VPR record to an alternate or new provider; or engaging with the Australian Red Cross and/or the council VPR Coordinator. |
| **Q. What can a VPR Coordinator do when a VPR record is not attached to a funded agency?**  A. Use the guidance provided in **Attachment 2**. |
| **Q. What support can Australian Red Cross provide and when?**  A. A funded agency (that is discontinuing or has discontinued services) or a VPR Coordinator can request Australian Red Cross work with a person, no longer receiving services, to provide personal emergency management planning support. This includes initial discussions about whether personal or community support networks can be identified.  The Australian Red Cross will advise of their assessment as well as the outcome of this engagement. This may include providing their assessment to the council for consideration.  The council, informed by this advice and assessment, may determine the need to consider the person for possible inclusion in the VPR database/maintaining the existing VPR record. |
| **Q. Is someone able to be listed on the VPR if they do not consent?**  A. No, a person needs to provide informed consent to be included on the VPR. A VPR record is able to be updated at any time. |
| **Q. Does informed consent only need to be provided once for someone to be on a VPR?**  A. As part of keeping records up to date, it is prudent to ensure the person continues to provide informed consent. |
| **Q. Can someone be listed on the VPR if they only meet some of the criteria?**  A. No, a person needs to meet all four criteria.  All service providers have duty of care responsibilities to their clients that includes ensuring appropriate emergency management arrangements are in place. Service providers need to prioritise supporting their clients in their emergency preparedness. Listing a person on a VPR is a last resort. It is critical for all parties to understand that evacuations of persons listed in a VPR cannot be guaranteed in emergencies, and any assistance is dependent on the capacity and ability of emergency services organisations to safely provide. |
| **Q. Can a NDIS service provider use the VPR online database?**  A. NDIS service providers, i.e. not funded by DFFH, should prioritise supporting their clients in their emergency preparedness, and can use the VPE policy as well as the above-mentioned VPR pre-requisite information to do this.  Listing a person on a VPR is a last resort as evacuations cannot be guaranteed in emergencies.  Should these agencies register to gain access to the VPR via the relevant council agencies are required to fully comply with the policy and process requirements, including ensuring that clients added to the VPR meet all four mandatory criteria. |

# Attachment 2 - Follow-up actions (contact attempts) for unattached / unverified VPR records

The following guidance provides some examples of what would be considered ‘reasonable follow-up actions’ by VPR Coordinators for persons with unverified VPR records and not attached to a funded agency. The below is intended to inform and/or support existing processes VPR Coordinators have in place.

**Important**: If a VPR record is attached to a funded agency – it is the funded agency’s responsibility to validate/verify the VPR record.

**Number and Type of Contact Attempts**

* **A minimum of three (3) contact attempts should be made directly with the person on the VPR.**
* **Alternatively, where the nominated person cannot be contacted directly, a further two (2) contact attempts (minimum) should be made with their nominated emergency contact or next of kin.**

***Note: At least one (1) of the above-mentioned contact attempts should be an in-person, home visit.***

Organisational safety policies should be followed when conducting home visits, and/or may consider seeking support from local agencies, where relevant.

All contact attempts should use a mix of approaches (e.g., landline phone call, mobile phone call, text message, email, home visit, calling card etc.) and be recorded in the VPR record.

In addition, a range of other sources can and should be used to support ‘exhaustive attempts’ to contact the person/nominated emergency contact/s, including exploring local networks, last known service provider/s, all contacts listed in the VPR database, etc.

When making phone calls use the following as guidance:

* call from an unblocked number
* call on different days (at least a week apart) and at different times of the day
* when calling mobile phones, consider sending up to 2 text messages (SMSs) at least 2 days apart, before calling to let the person know contacts attempts are being made
* when texting, provide the person with the option of nominating a preferred time to receive a call and/or the option to call the staff member directly via return text
* leave voicemail message/s with your contact details
* if relevant, note if voicemail greeting message identifies a different person and/or contact details
* consider timing of contact attempts (e.g., text between 8 am to 8 pm, calls between 8 am to 7 pm).

The table below provides a number of possible outcomes and suggested actions.

| **Possible Outcome** | **Suggested Actions** |
| --- | --- |
| No Contact - All reasonable contact attempts have been exhausted | Send a letter to last known address as a final contact attempt. The letter should:   * provide an overview of the purpose of the VPR and the purpose of the contact attempts; * provide a timeframe for the person to contact you about this matter (e.g., within four (4) weeks of the date of the letter, and indicate that if no contact is made by this date, then it will be considered that the person is no longer eligible, consents to be on the VPR or is no longer contactable, and their record will be closed/removed from the VPR database).   If no contact is made within the nominated time period update the VPR record (including adding detailed record keeping about the contact attempts) before closing the record. |
| Person contacted – No longer needs to be on the VPR | Close the VPR record.  **Important**: Before closing the VPR record ensure it is updated with detailed record keeping about the contact attempts and discussion/s. |
| Person contacted - Continues to be eligible and provided informed consent | If it has been established the person remains eligible aim to determine if there is a new funded agency that needs to be assigned to the record. Update the VPR record.  If there is no funded agency and/or Australia Red Cross has advised the person is unable to develop an emergency management plan the VPR Coordinator may determine the need to consider possible inclusion in the VPR database or maintaining the existing VPR record. A VPR Coordinator can create a funded agency profile (creating a merged view) to be able to edit/manage the VPR record including updating its status to verified. |
| Person contacted – No longer provides informed consent/requests to be removed | Close the VPR record. Follow-up with a letter if it is appropriate to do so.  **Important**: Before closing the VPR record ensure it is updated with detailed record keeping about the contact attempts and discussion/s.  If however there is concern the person is not providing informed consent consider if other supports can be provided such as engaging Australian Red Cross to work with the person on preparedness planning and having supports in place.  If Australian Red Cross advises an emergency management plan has been developed and supports in place - send a follow-up letter to the person and close the VPR record (with detailed record keeping within the VPR record).  If Australian Red Cross advises the person is unable to develop an emergency management plan/does not have supports in place – follow the *Person contacted - Continues to be eligible and provided informed consent* process.  **Note**: Australian Red Cross is able to provide support once contact has been established. |

# Attachment 3 - Consent Form

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Vulnerable Persons Register: Consent Form**  **Consent to sharing of personal information** | |  | | --- | | **<< Agency name>>** | | **<<Date entered/revalidated on VPR>>** | | **<<Entered by (name/id)>>** | |

**Personal details**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name:** | | **ID ref #:** |
| **Date of birth:** | **Address:** | |

Your consent is requested to enable your personal information to be provided by you, your delegate or your service provider and be stored in a secure Vulnerable Persons Register.

This information will be available to Victoria Police, councils and/or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing due to their role in leading or supporting emergency management activities. Information will be accessed to support emergency management planning and exercising and may be accessed and used for emergency response and recovery.

Through the Vulnerable Persons Register, your information may also be available to other health and community services providers and/or other emergency management organisations for database management or emergency management planning and response.

Being listed on a Vulnerable Persons Register is voluntary and you can request to remove yourself at any time. Once you have provided consent it will remain current until you request to remove consent.

The information collected on a Vulnerable Persons Register, which may be disclosed will include:

* **personal identification information -** including your name, date of birth and address information
* **contact information** – your personal and emergency contact information
* **personal care needs** – your health and mobility (such as life sustaining medications and equipment), security and access, communication and cognitive, or other needs that would be relevant to emergency services officers in considering the nature of assistance you may require.

Your information will be treated in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and only available to authorised personnel for the above-mentioned purposes.

**Section 1 - Please read the following:**

* Being listed on the Vulnerable Persons Register does not guarantee assistance in an emergency.
* Emergency management planning is important and it is an individual’s responsibility to have a plan and be prepared for an emergency.

Information to help me plan for an emergency has been provided and/or discussed with me:

**YES**

**Section 2 - Record of consent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Written consumer consent**  The worker/practitioner has discussed with me how and why certain information about me may be shared with other organisations, as set out above. I understand this and I give my consent for the information to be shared in the way set out in this form. |

**Signature: Date (dd/mm/yyyy):**

**Or**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Verbal consumer consent**  I have discussed with the consumer how and why certain information may be shared with other organisations, as set out in this form. I am satisfied that this has been understood and that informed consent has been given for the information to be shared as set out in this form. |

**Or**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Consumer does not have the capacity to provide consent**  *(that is, they do not understand the nature of what they are consenting to, or the consequences)* |

**Consent given by authorised representative:**

*Name (authorised representative)*

**Sign: Date (dd/mm/yyyy):**

**Relationship: Contact number:**

To ensure that the consumer/ authorised representative can make an informed decision about consenting to the sharing of information as detailed above, the worker/practitioner should (tick when completed):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * 1. Discuss with the consumer/authorised representative the proposed sharing of information with other organisations as outlined in this form. |  |
| * 1. Explain that the consumer’s information will only be shared with these services/agencies if the consumer/authorised representative has agreed. |  |
| * 1. Provide the consumer/authorised representative with information about privacy, such as the brochure *Your Information – It’s Private - https://www.vic.gov.au/primary-its-private.* |  |
| * 1. Provide the consumer/authorised representative with a copy of this form once completed. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Consent obtained/witnessed by:** |  |
| **Name:** | **Agency:** |
| **Position:­­­** | **Contact number:** |
| **Sign:** | **Date:** |

# Attachment 4 - ‘At-Risk’ Local Facility List Template

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Council Name:  LGA Name:  Date Updated: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Identification | | | | | | | | | **Address** | | | | | | | | | | | **Contact Information** | | | | | |
| Ref | **Facility Name** | **Facility Type** | **Facility Type (subset, if required)** | **# of clients /people** | **High/low care** | **Residential/Non-residential** | **Operating Hours** | **Lot** | | **Unit** | **Level** | **Street Number** | **Street Name** | **Street Type** | **Suburb** | **Postcode** | **Latitude (optional)** | **Longitude (optional)** | **Contact name 1** | | **Phone 1** | **Availability**  *(business hours, after hours, 24 hours)* | **Contact name 2** | **Phone 2** | **Availability**  *(business hours, after hours, 24 hours)* |
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| To receive this document in another format [email Emergency Management Branch](mailto:EMPolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au?subject=Accessable%20version%20of%20the%20Social%20Services%20Sector%20Emergency%20Management%20Policy) <EMPolicy@dffh.vic.gov.au>.  Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.  © State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, **October 2024**.  Available on the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing’s [Service Providers Emergency Management website](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management) <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/emergency-management>. |

1. Informed consent (the 4th criterion) is required before a person can be registered/revalidated in a VPR. Therefore, the VPR should only list a very small number of people. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Victorian State Emergency Management Plan, November 2023, page 91 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Further information about who constitutes an authorised representative is provided in the Information Privacy Act 2000, section 64 - part 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. While pets may be listed, it is important not to raise expectations about emergency response capacity to assist in the relocation or evacuation of pets. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Victoria Police and emergency services organisations rely on up-to-date VPR data. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)