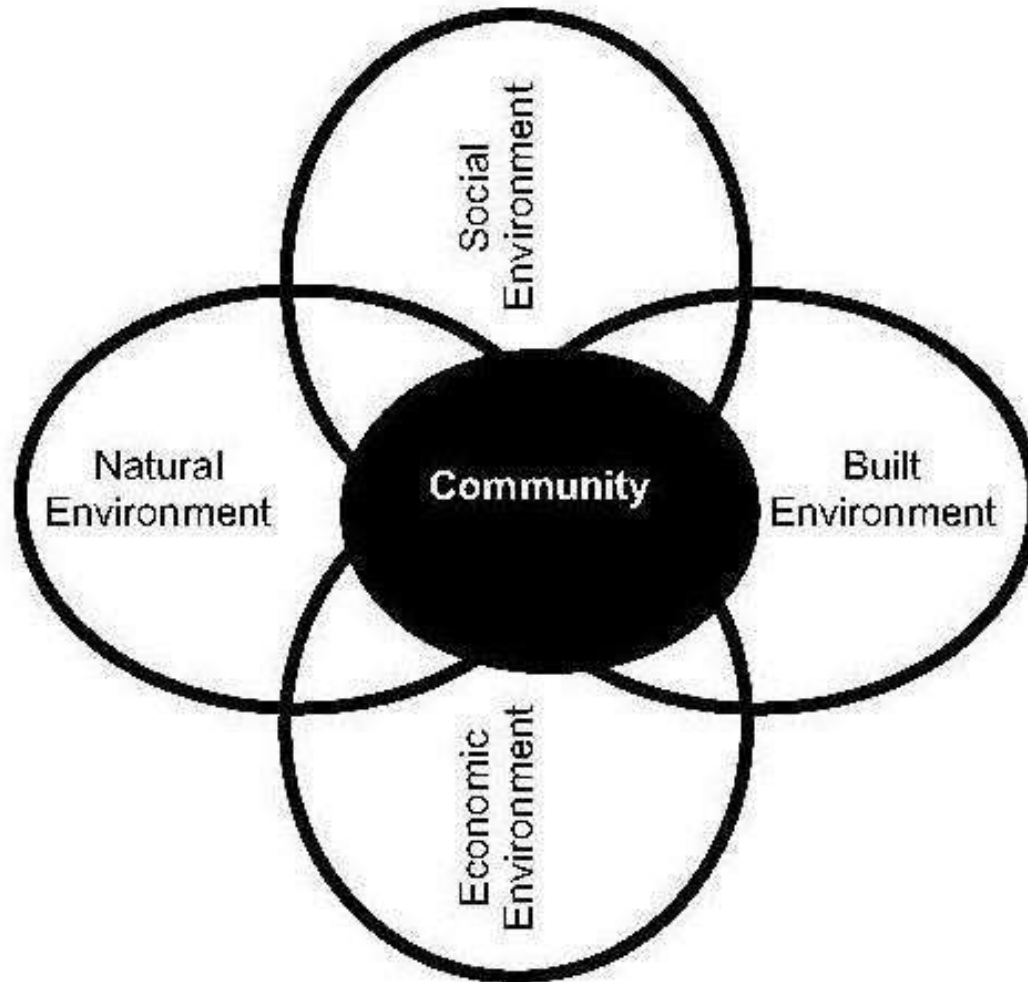


# Victorian Bushfire Psycho-social Recovery Plan



Dr Sandra Radovini  
Deputy Chief Psychiatrist-Children & Youth  
Mental Health and Drugs Division  
Department of Health

# The Aim- Integrated & holistic recovery

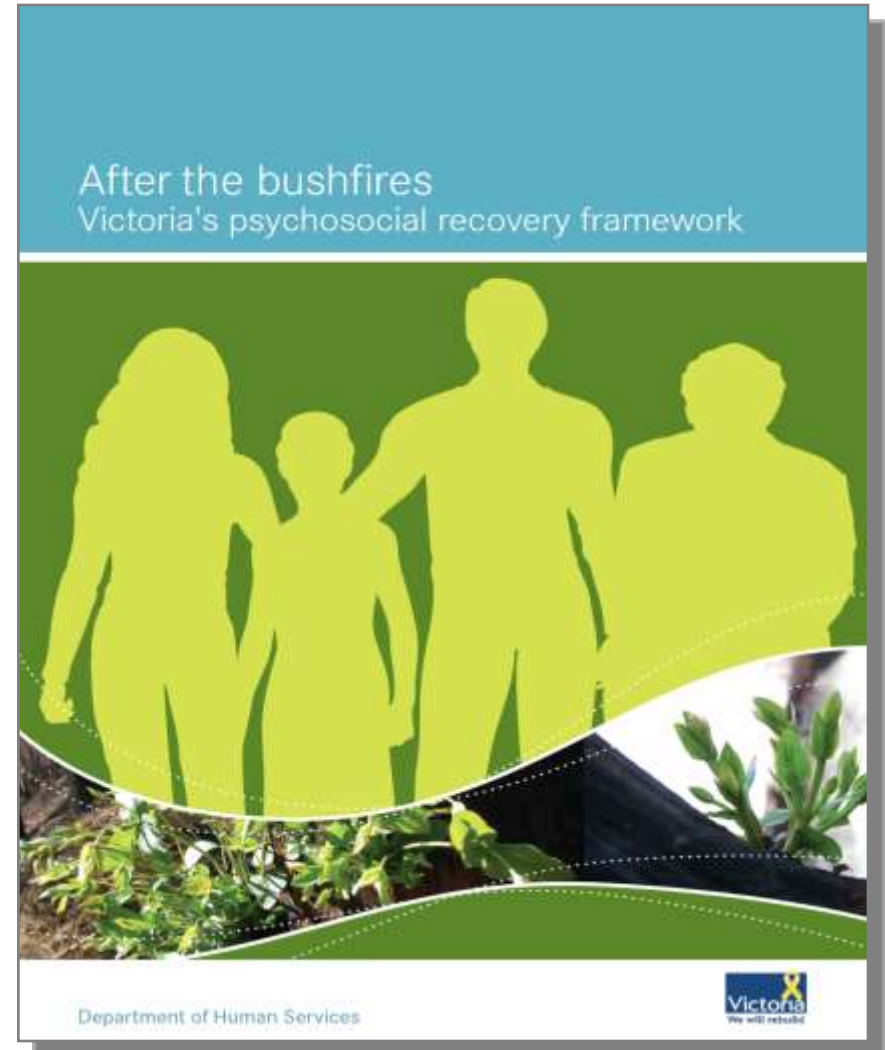


# Victorian Bushfire Rebuilding and Recovery – State Government Role

- VBRRA –Vic Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority
  - est. by Premier
  - Built, Economic, Natural Environment
- Dept. Human Services/Dept. of Health
  - to lead 'People' area
  - 'Psycho-social Recovery Framework' document

# The framework- “After the Bushfires:” document

- Evidence informed policy framework
- Community recovery principles
- Developed with expert advice
- Highlights governments investment



# The Principles-

## Post emergency individual & community psychosocial support

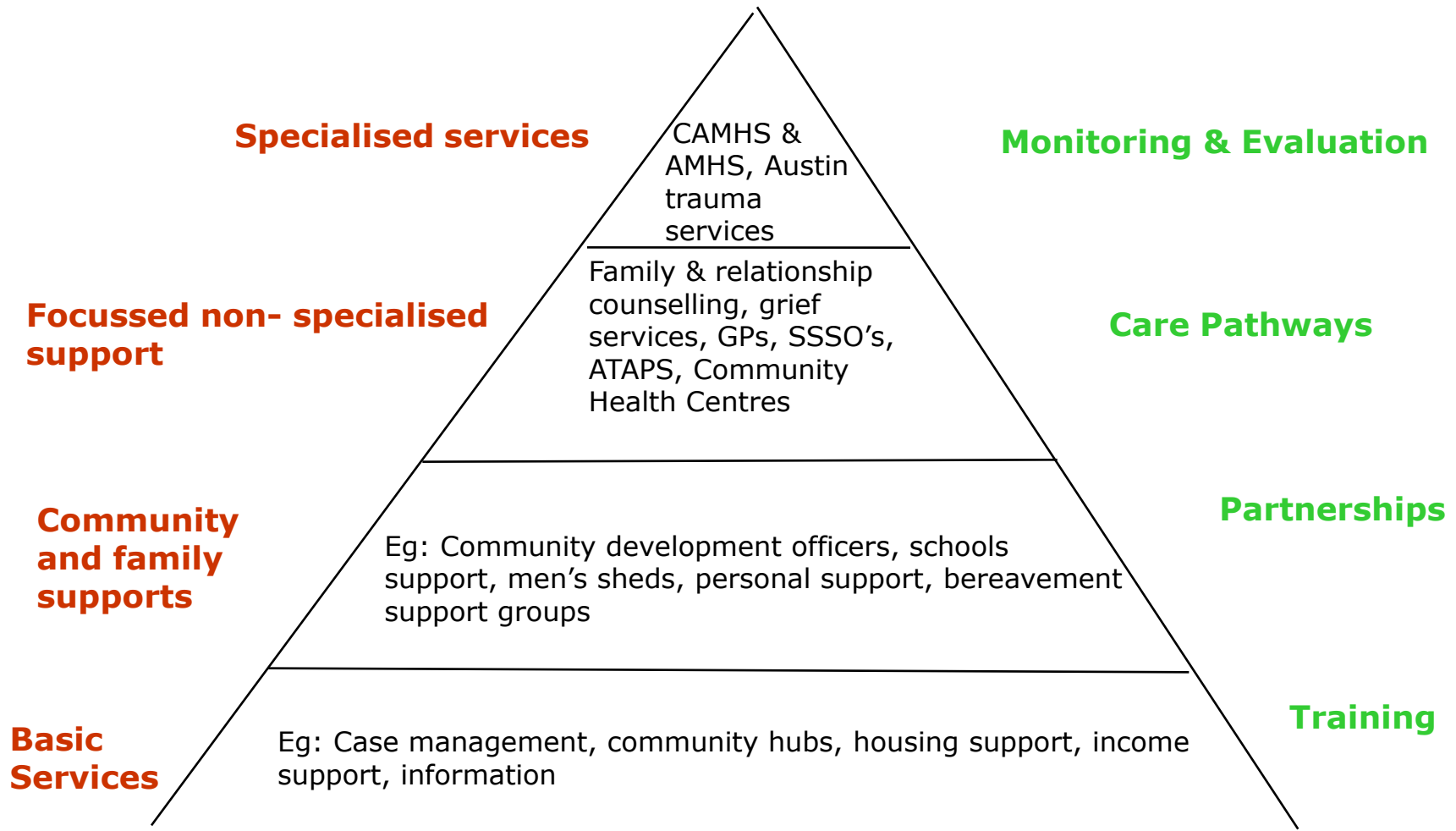
- *Integrate services*
- *Use local services*
- *Involve the community*
- *Be flexible*
- *Share information*
- *Train workers*

# The WHO Predictions – Prevalence of Psycho-social Problems After an Emergency (adapted van Ommeren, 2006)

|   | <b>Before Emergency</b><br>12-month prevalence | <b>After Emergency</b><br>12-month prevalence      |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Severe mental disorder</b><br>(eg psychosis, severe depression, severe disabling anxiety disorder) | 2-3%   | 3-4%   |
| <b>Mild or moderate mental disorder</b><br>(eg mild and moderate depression or anxiety)               | 10%  | 20% (reduces to 15% with natural recovery)         |
| <b>Moderate or severe psychological/social distress</b><br>(No formal disorder but severe distress)   | No estimate                                    | Large percentage (reduces due to natural recovery) |
| <b>Mild psychological/social distress</b>   | No estimate                                    | Small percentage (Increases over time)             |

# The Intervention Pyramid

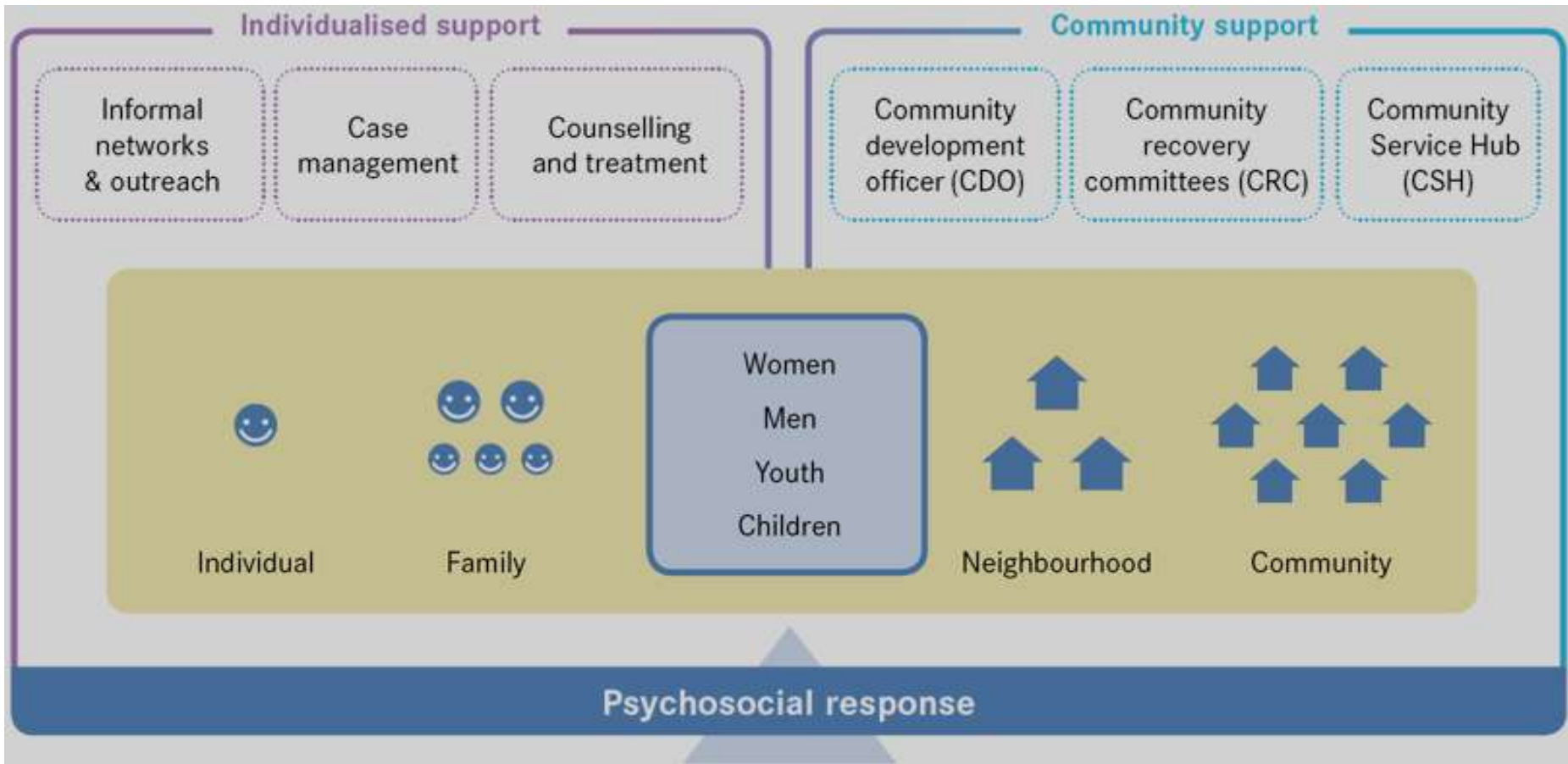
## for Psychosocial Supports [adapted IASC, 2007]



# Cross government commitment

- State
  - DHS/DoH
  - DEECD
- Commonwealth
  - DoHA- 7.5 million
  - FaHCSIA
    - Youth counselling and outreach
  - Centrelink
    - Case Management
    - Community Service Hubs Deployment

# Psycho-social recovery – Individuals, families & communities



# 1. Basic services

- Bushfire case managers
  - ‘one stop shop’ help people access supports and services
  - Provide service system navigation and advocacy
- Community Service Hubs [x10]
  - Provide information re local and service pathways
  - House relevant service providers
- Grants- redevelopment money

## 2. Community & Family supports

- Community development officers [local councils]
- Youth Activities -4.3million youth 'initiative'
- Telephone counselling services
- Capacity Building
  - Rob Gordon and Ruth Wraith Community Information Sessions
  - Schools
  - Community leader training via *beyondblue*

### 3. Focused non-specialised supports

- SSSO's [DEECD]
- Family & relationship counselling [Increased C/weath funding to family support services]
- Australian Centre for Grief & Bereavement- Grief Counselling-add 2.5 eft
- Additional ATAPS [Access to Allied Psychological Services] via GPs
- Additional counsellors @ Kinglake and Mitchell Community Health Centres
- Counselling vouchers [BAF]

# 4. Specialised services

- CAMHS- [5 metro,7 rural] [Child and adolescent MH services]
  - Redeployment of staff
  - Increased flexibility re 'catchment area' rules
  - 'Lower' threshold for those seeking help
  - partnerships
- AMHS [Area mental health services]
- Austin Centre for Trauma Related Mental Health
  - primary assessment and (initial) treatment
  - secondary consultation
  - direct service delivery
  - training and education

# Pre-bushfire

- CAMHS services cover all of Victoria based on catchment areas
- Metro & rural CAMHS differ significantly in size, resources, arrangements with other local services, availability of local private practitioners.
- Schools have different arrangements re accessing student support, DEECD SSSO's vs purchasing model [private providers]

# CAMHS in bushfire affected areas

- Most affected area
  - Goulburn Valley- Seymour clinic + + +
  - Austin CAMHS + +
  - Eastern CAMHS +
- Other bushfire affected areas
  - Gippsland CAMHS
  - Bendigo CAMHS

# The challenges...

- Defining the role of CAMHs
  - Psychological first aid, first line response
  - Early intervention for identified vulnerable groups
  - Community education & support, MH promotion
  - Transitioning to core business, managing demand
- Skill set & capacity of CAMHS clinicians in a disaster environment
- Collaboration with DEECD, kindergartens, schools, maternal & child health services
- Work with agencies & services themselves severely impacted by the fires

# Local solutions for local problems...local partnerships

- **GV CAMHS**

- MOU with regional DEECD to provide outreach to 11 schools in most severely affected area
- Direct work with students, parents, staff - screening, early intervention, treatment
- Very well received but not sustainable

So.....

# Solution

- DEECD funding for 2 CAMHS positions for 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2009 for ongoing work with schools
  - Developing clear triaging & referral pathways to care
  - Utilisation of counselling through ATAPS where appropriate
  - Support for new SSSO staff
  - CAMHS transition back to core business

# Austin CAMHS partnerships

- Community Education Sessions for parents/carers
  - Responding to need identified by local Bushfire recovery committee
  - Delivered in collaboration with local family support services
  - Aim- increase awareness of children's emotional & behavioural responses to trauma
  - Sessions target 0-10, 10- youth

# New Training

- Community & Family Supports
  - *beyondblue* Community support training
  - School Intervention [ACATLGN & Principals Australia] [DoHA]
- Focused non-specialised supports
  - Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) Training
  - SSSO training [DEECD,DHS]
- Specialised Services
  - Clinical interventions training - development of training material 'Core Interventions for Common Mental Health Disorders post Trauma & Disaster' [DoHA]- ATAPS

# Recent New Initiatives – Child and Youth

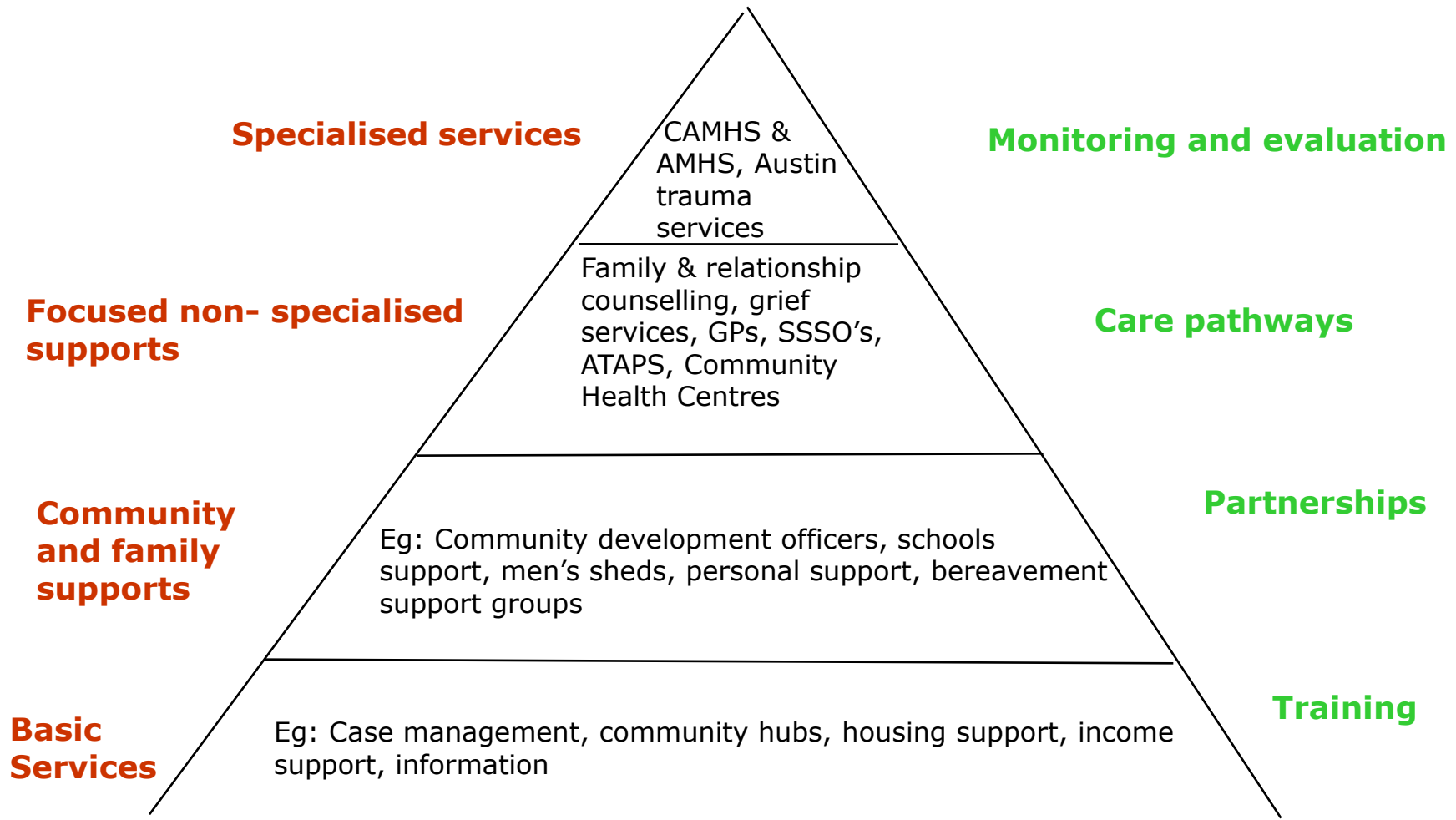
- Community & Family Supports
  - VBAF Gift Monies to be used
    - Parent Information and Support Groups
      - 3 age groups, preschool/primary/secondary
    - Bereavement Support Groups for Children and Youth (ACGB)
      - age 5-17...

# Preparedness

- Whole of Govt Response to Preparing for Next Fire Season
  - Health and Community Services 'Prepare, Act, Survive' Kit [available Oct/Nov ]
    - Psycho-education re psychological and emotional preparedness and vulnerable populations [children]
  - DEECD: workbooks to primary school teachers and brochures to secondary schools students
  - Red Cross: materials suitable for children on web site

# The Intervention Pyramid

## for Psychosocial Supports [adapted IASC, 2007]



# The Future- Victorian Bushfire Psycho- social Recovery Framework

- Identify & support partnerships to address emerging needs
- Support coordinated state and local planning
- Additional training
- Increased availability of specialist trauma and grief services
- Focused attention on child and youth issues
- Monitoring and evaluation