

Crisis communications for cyber incidents

Tom McPherson
Director Strategic Communications

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**FIRE
RESCUE**
VICTORIA



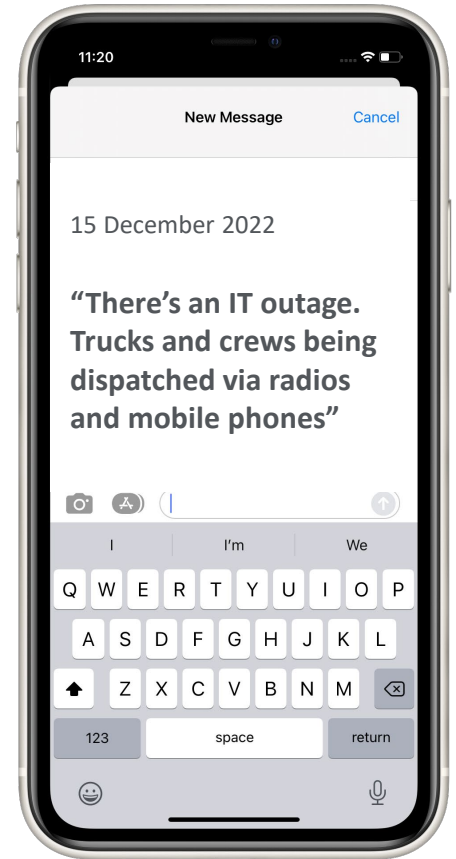


What happened at FRV?



What happened?

- On 15 December 2022, FRV was **made aware of a cyber-attack** on our internal IT environment
- Our investigations confirmed on 25 December 2022 that some FRV data had been stolen and we were informed of a **suspicious post on the dark web on 11 January 2023**
- We are **unable to verify the exact information that has been posted** on the dark web
- We continue to work with law enforcement, relevant regulators and other government organisations



What happened?

- A 'threat actor' infiltrated our system
- Once inside our network they were able to move across virtually all our on-premise servers, until they reached the 'brain' of our system
- At this point they were able to encrypt the vast majority of our systems, locking us out

LIVE BLOG Keep up with the latest ASX and business news

Fire Rescue Victoria confirms cyber attack from 'external third party' as outage continues

Posted Fri 16 Dec 2022 at 1:13pm



Melbourne Today 6°/14°>

Herald Sun

My News Today's Paper Local Victoria National World Opinion Business Entertainment

News > Victoria

Firefighters being dispatched with pagers, radios and mobile phones, months after cyber attack

(Victoria Facebook)

Full restoration of Victoria's firefighter computer dispatch system may still be months away, after a cyber attack in mid-December.

Shannon Deery and James Campbell

2 min read March 26, 2023 - 12:00AM Sunday Herald Sun



HACKING SCARE

NEWS

Crisis Communications Approach

- **Transparency** – sharing what we knew, when we knew it
- **Frequent updates** to employees, stakeholders and the community
- **Multi-channel** – internal communications, media, social media, letters and emails to ex-employees and others potentially affected



A press conference was held on 'Day 1' of the cyber incident response

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Crisis Comms Approach

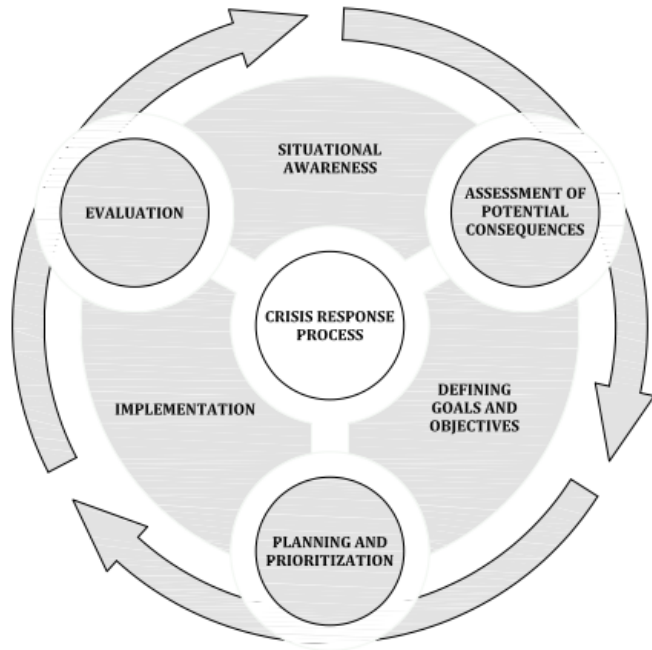


Figure 3 — Process for the crisis management team response

EMPA Communication Principle
Strategic messaging builds connection and credibility.

ISO
Standard
Informed
FRV's
Approach

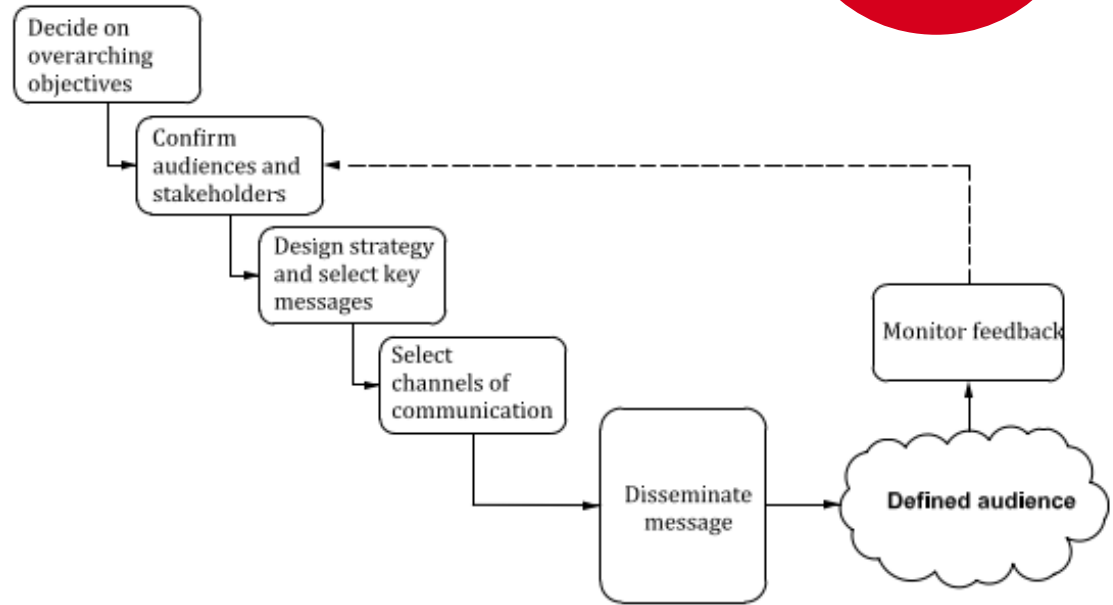
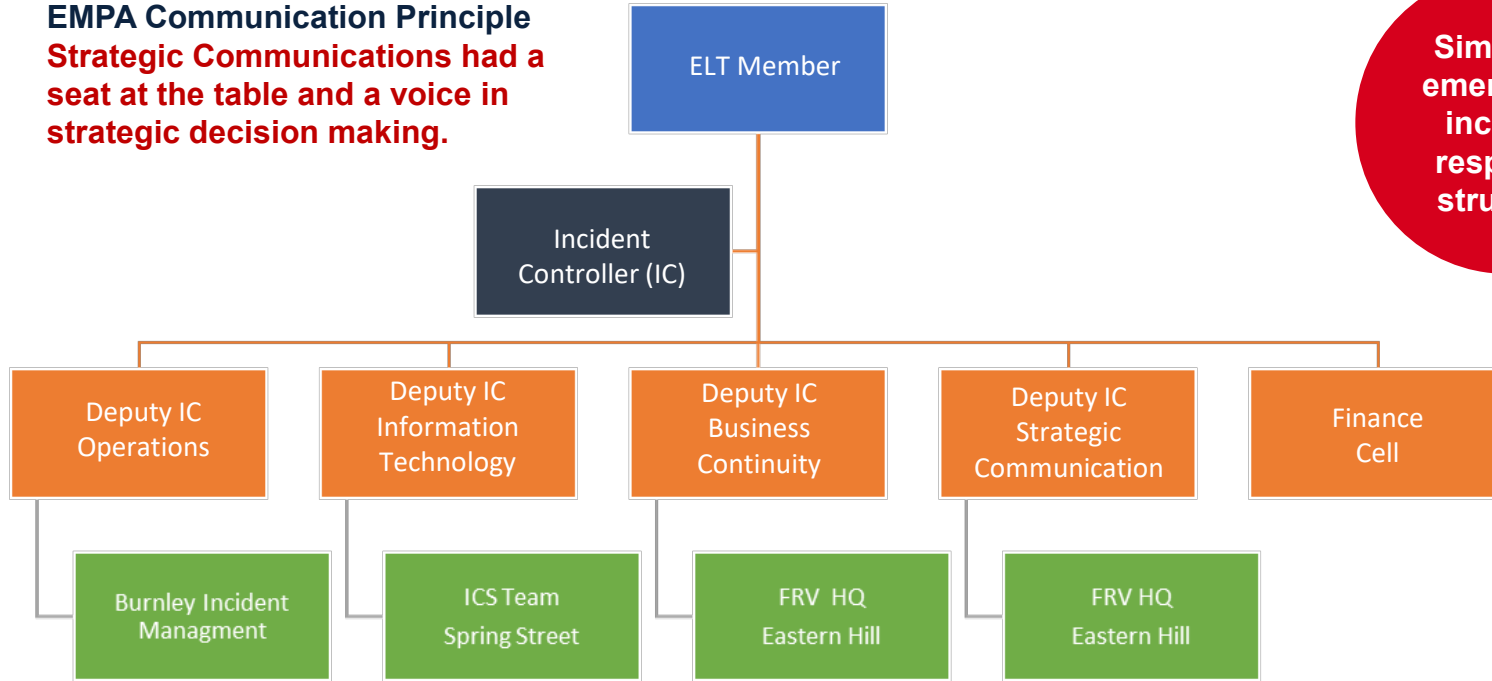


Figure 6 — Crisis communication flow

Incident Management Team

EMPA Communication Principle
Strategic Communications had a seat at the table and a voice in strategic decision making.



Similar to emergency incident response structure

Internal Comms – Day One

- FRV mobile phones
- FRV Leadership – Managers and Directors cascading verbal updates
- Union Membership distribution
- Focusing on ensuring staff were informed, including updates on payroll and rosters
- Reminder to staff not to use personal emails for work purposes



Joint communication to FRV staff 1200hrs Thursday 15 December 2022

Fire Rescue Victoria is experiencing a widespread IT outage. This is affecting all systems, including FRV Network (Intranet). Community safety has not been compromised.

The community should continue to call Triple Zero (000) in an emergency.

Crews and appliances are continuing to deploy in response to incidents via manual dispatch protocols.

The District Command Centre (DCC) has been activated in support of Operational Response and Business Continuity.

FRV has activated an Incident Management Team (IMT) operating from Eastern Hill Headquarters.



Joint communication to FRV staff 1600hrs Thursday 15 December 2022

The Acting Commissioner updated Victorians via a press conference at 2pm today about the

It's very early days, and we are still investigating what has occurred, but at this stage it is clear

FRV is doing everything it can to mitigate any risk and is conducting a full investigation. FRV

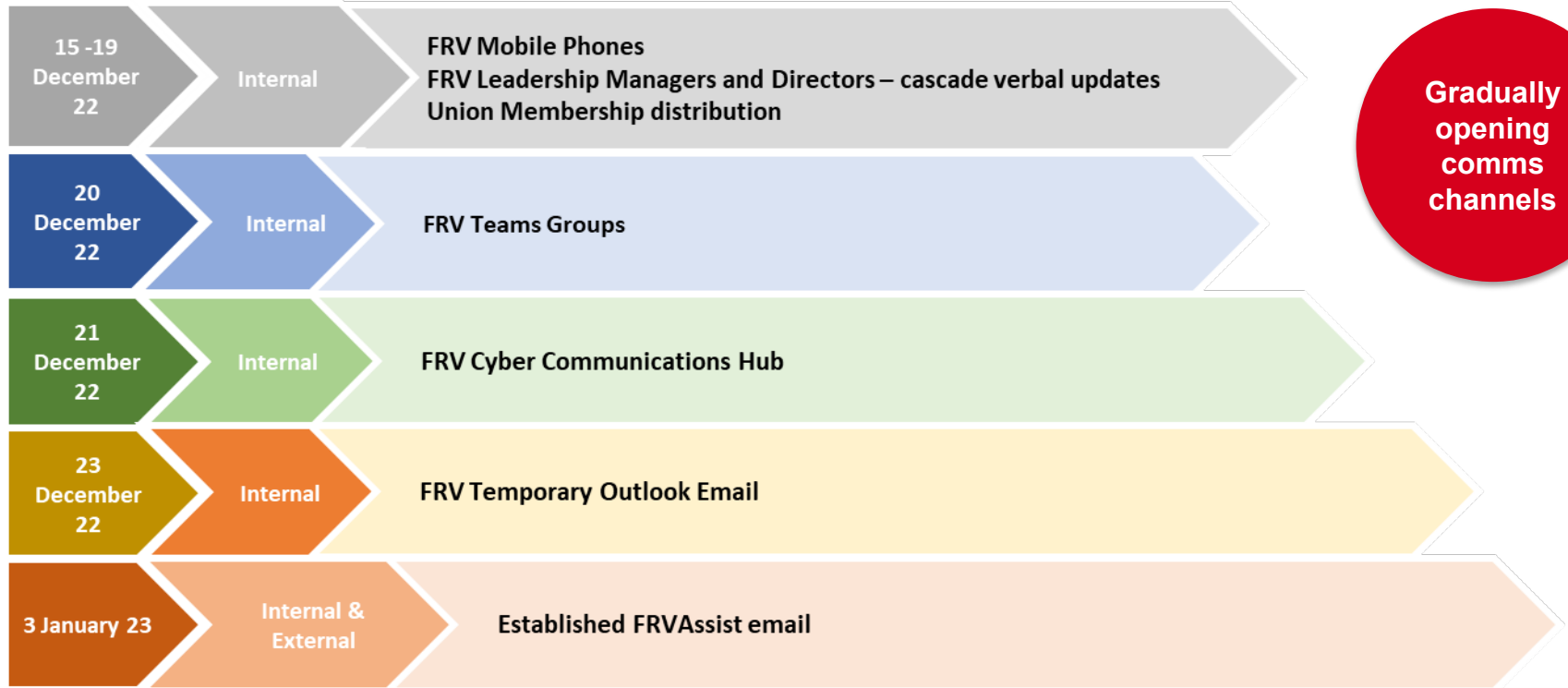
External Comms – Day One

- Press conference with FRV
Commissioner Gavin Freeman AFSM
- Afternoon radio grabs
- Focused on message community safety not being compromised
- Victorians should continue to call Triple Zero (000)
- Enabled FRV to respond quickly to the large number of media enquiries

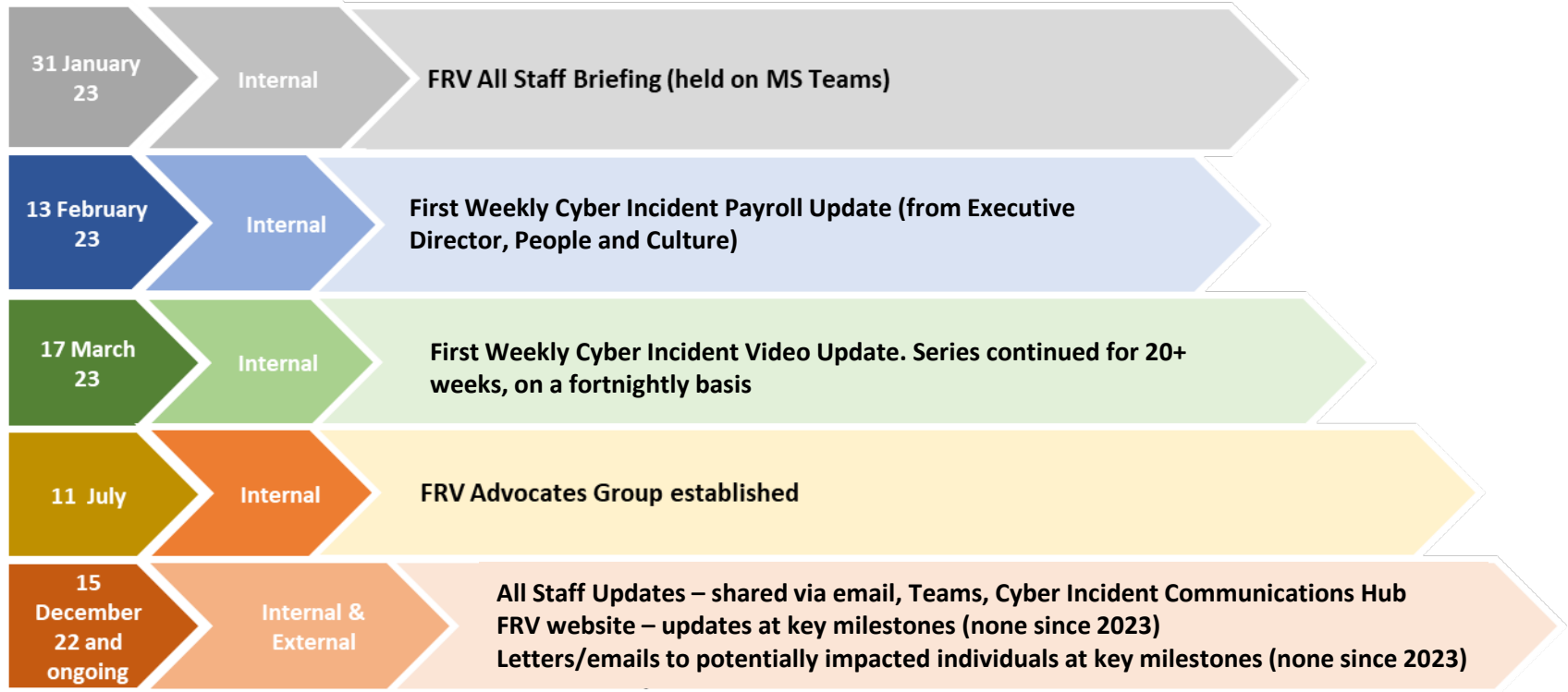


- Media statement posted on FRV website (once back online)

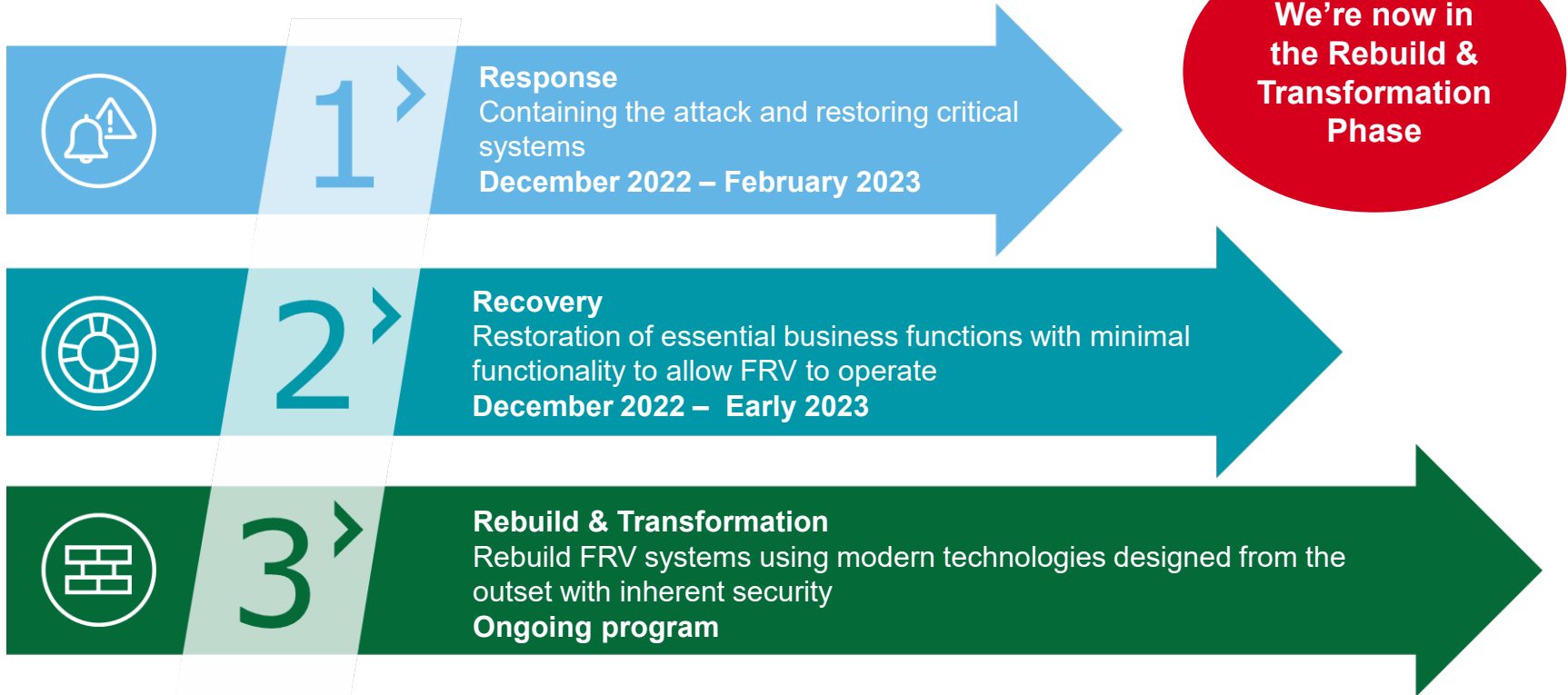
Communications – Day Two Onwards



Communications – Day Two Onwards



Key Phases



What worked well

- **Press conference with the FRV Commissioner**

Enabled FRV to share important community messages and reflected our commitment to transparency

- **Cyber Incident Communications Hub**

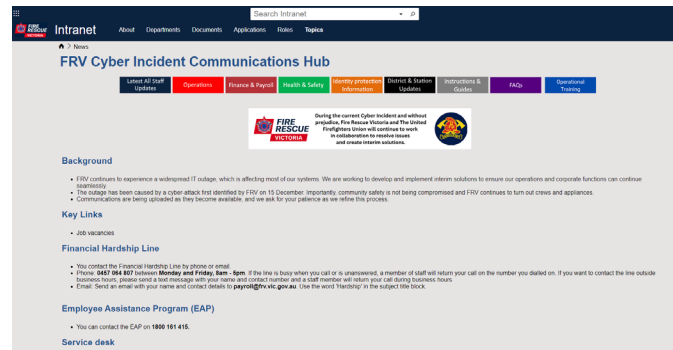
One source of truth and destination for staff

- **FRV Assist mailbox**

One email address for staff and external stakeholders with any questions about the cyber incident

- **Cyber incident video updates**

Staff prefer video or in-person updates



Lessons Learned

- **Have a crisis communications plan** for a cyber-attack (a Business Continuity Plan alone is not enough).
Make sure everyone understands their role. Practice it
- **Seek expert support and advice** (you don't need to do it alone)
- **Establish alternative ways of contacting employees/stakeholders** (Cloud systems, offsite backups etc)
- **Be careful about sharing information about timelines** (cyber-attacks are unpredictable. You don't know what you don't know)



Lessons Learned

- **Don't forget staff who may not receive comms through internal comms channels** – for example seconded staff or staff on extended leave
- **Ensure you have an offsite media contacts database** (it will save time on day one if you ever have a cyber-attack)
- **Try to move to in-person or video updates as soon as possible** – Staff want to hear directly from leaders (video first preference if in-person not possible).



Questions?



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