

The Vulnerability Assessment Matrix (VAM)

The Matrix has been developed to encourage organisations who work with vulnerable people to effectively identify and prioritise which of their service users may need assistance in a time of emergency.

The assessment is undertaken outside of the context of an emergency. Emergencies are complex and overlay a range of factors which can cloud the judgement of priorities because of the rapidly changing environment. The VAM score provides an objective score that indicates the client's usual capacity and enables the preparation of emergency plans. The specific impact of an emergency can then be considered as it changes, depending not only on the individual's ratings but also on how the implementation of their plan has reduced their vulnerability.

The four components of the VAM are:

1. **Communication** - Whether a person can communicate more than just their basic needs to unfamiliar people
2. **Personal Care** – Whether a person can manage their:
 - direct personal care – feeding, washing, toileting, administering medication/ basic medical treatment
 - personal support activities such as organising health services, transport, financial management, laundry and meal preparation
 - emotional support to prevent self-harm or harm to others
 - companionship, and arrange activities for the development of children
3. **Mobility** - Whether a person has the ability to be mobile outside the home, as well as able to complete light housework, laundry, meal preparation, grocery shopping, travel, money management, and telephoning
4. **Social Networks** – Whether the person has social networks, which may include family and friends, provide essential support, information and mobility assistance. Strong networks provide access to support for tasks and the ability to respond to incidents as they occur.

The VAM is a framework that provides a consistent way to assess vulnerability prior to an event and allows people who are likely to need help to be identified and prioritised.

The scale

0. No support required
1. Support often required
2. Support always required

	No support required	Support often required	Support always required
Communication			
Mobility			
Personal Care			
Social Connection			

VAM Rating

- 0 - 2 Monitoring may be required
- 2 - 4 Follow-up will be required
- 5 - 8 Support is likely to be needed at regularly intervals

Note any client with 2 in any area is vulnerable and a plan should be made.

This is a guide and needs to be modified based on your knowledge of mitigating factors. Knowledge

Creating and managing the Lists

1. Personal & Locational Information

First Name	Last Name	Phone	Address 1	Address 2	Suburb	Postcode	Vulnerable area?
							Y/N
Jenny	Smith	0411 XXX XXX	4 Green Street		Malanda		

2. Vulnerability Information

VAM	Level of Need (0, 1 or 2)			
	C	P	M	S

3. Emergency and Planning Information

Does the individual have an emergency plan?	Emergency Plan enacted?	Contacted?			Date/ Time	Comments	URGENT RESPONSE REQUIRED Y/N
Y/N	Y/N	P	H	O			

Download a copy of this excel spread sheet from <http://www.communitycentral.com.au/localresponse.aspx>

The Matrix has been developed to encourage organisations who work with people who are vulnerable to quickly and easily identify and prioritise which of their services users may need

Although access to utilities such as electricity, water, telephone and internet has considerable impact on the individual's capacity to function, the impact must be judged alongside the social functioning score. For example,

The emergency information is the expert knowledge of the Disaster Management team

The vulnerability information is the expert knowledge of the community organisation.